
<http://www.talossa1979.com>

ÁR PÄTS

THE CLASSIC HISTORY OF
THE KINGDOM OF TALOSSA
1979-2008

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<http://www.talossa1979.com>

PREFACE: What is the Kingdom of Talossa?



Ar Päts means “Our Country.” And I founded our country – **the Kingdom of Talossa** – on December 26, 1979, when I was fourteen years old, in a public ceremony in my father’s living room in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The micronation of Talossa has been an amazing ride for 28 years. It all started when I was a high school sophomore learning German and dreaming of worlds beyond my boring home. The day after Christmas in 1979, I declared my bedroom to be its own “independent, sovereign country,” the Kingdom of Talossa, with me as its monarch, as well as its only citizen. This gave me the opportunity to draw maps and flags, and even to design my own Talossan language.

Instead of dying out right away like it should have, the political adventure called Talossa has grown into a worldwide community of members from the US, Canada, Italy, France, Brazil, Argentina, and elsewhere. It grew from being my personal obsession in Milwaukee to being the corporate obsession of dozens of people, many on the internet. During its first 28 years, some 130 people have been involved with Talossa: some for years, most as flashes in the pan. Thanks to everyone who left something behind as part of our bizarre story, all events and quotes in this book are real. Chapters and paragraphs are numbered so you can cite them, just like Scripture.

Starting in 1995, the internet brought enormous growth but also conflict. New citizens picked fights with the old pre-internet population. In 2004, the country’s former ruling party decided that Talossa was “their” country and anyone who disagreed, including the country’s founders, and the majority of Talossans, was unpatriotic. What began as a schoolboy’s dream, an excuse to design a flag and a language and write anthems, descended into vitriol and hatred. The next year, the owners of Talossa’s websites kicked most of the population out of “their” country and, in violation of our trademark, invented their own separate online “Talossa.” The rest of Talossa, desperate to rebuild, turned immigration over to a failed businessman who tried to pack Talossa full of his own friends and family in order to oust the country’s original population and grab the brass ring himself. In the angry fallout that ensued, nearly all the original Talossans stood aside and waited two years for the furor to die down before putting Talossa’s website up again.

Today, several groups out there on the internet call themselves “Talossa.” As a Talossan, I belong to the original, here in Milwaukee. This book tells the story of the ‘real’ Talossa. We have the allegiance of most of the original citizens, and we own the archives, trademark, and Wisconsin corporate registration. As Talossa’s founder and a part of this amazing adventure for more than half my life, as well as its only active historian, the inventor of the Talossan language, and designer of virtually all Talossa’s flags, imagery, topology, songs, iconography and identity, I find it impossible to leave the old place I’ve been a part of for so long.

And as a published historian with a master’s degree in history, I feel compelled to tell its amazing

story. *Ár Páts* began in September 1994 as a serialized history. In 2005, Marc Moisan, a Talossan court justice from Nova Scotia, wrote: “I have been privileged to count myself as a citizen of a micronation that will most certainly remain a part of world history.” Talossa, more than any other micronation, seems to be all about history. It is a place where people can get involved and leave their mark. Its website – www.talossa1979.com – touts Talossa as “a country small enough for your voice to be heard, yet large enough for that voice to make a real difference.”

Looking back on all the work I’ve put into Talossa these past 28 years, telling the story is even more fun than living it. I hope you enjoy the ride as much as I have!

R. Ben Madison, M.A., 16 September 2007

GLOSSARY

One feature of this book that might amaze (or annoy) the reader is its frequent use of abbreviations and “Talossan lingo.” But, this is how Talossans actually write, speak, and think. So, this glossary will help clarify the story told in these pages.

59: See “Fifty-nine.”

Abbavilla: Talossa’s capital, on the UWM campus, named for the Swedish pop band Abba.

Amish: Derogatory term for non-online Talossans.

Androids: Right-wing teens Andrew Wozniak and his friends “Davron.”

Anniversary Party: Occasional winter party to celebrate the Anniversary.

Anniversary: 26 December, the nation’s birthday.

Ár Páts: This book, the history of Talossa.

Atatürk: Talossa’s northern province, one of seven.

BA Beach: “Bare Ass” Beach, the shore of Atatürk.

Ben Wu: 1981 name for Støtanneu.

Ben: Robert Ben Madison, called either “Ben” or “King Robert” depending on the context.

Berber Project: Ben’s 1996 book on Berbers (q.v.).

Berbers: Native inhabitants of North Africa, credited with being Talossa’s ‘spiritual ancestors.’

BFT: Bob Fights Ticket. 1987-88 party.

Bicoloreu: The two-colour (green and red) RT flag.

Black Hand. See MN.

Bradford Province: Brief split from Vuode (1992).

Bugs, Bug Nations: Micronations (q.v.) that are weirdly obsessed with Talossa.

CALL: Conservatives Against Liberal Laziness (1988).

Cestoûr: Pronounced “chess-TOUR,” any non-Talossan foreigner.

Cézembre: Talossa’s island province, off the coast of

St. Malo, France; one of seven provinces.

Clark: Monthly law bulletin published by the SoS.

CLP: Conservative Loyalist Party (2005).

CNV: Council for Nationalist Victory (1982).

Constituziun: The 1988 (and 2007) constitutions.

Contrâ: A “no” vote on a bill in the Ziu.

COP: Clockwork Orange Party, founded in 1995.

Cort: The “Uppermost Cort” is Talossa’s supreme court. It has three Justices, one a “Senior Justice.”

Cosâ: Lower house of the Ziu, it has 200 seats.

Covenants of Rights and Freedoms: Sort of a Talossan “Bill of Rights.” Part of the OrgLaw.

CÚG: Committee for the Use of the Language, group that directs the Talossan language.

Cybercits: Talossans who first found out about Talossa from the internet.

Dandelions: Native-born children of Talossans.

Davron: Right-wing teenagers (later adults) Dave Kuenn and Ron Rosáis.

DDP: Democratic Dandipratic Party.

Distáin: Deputy Prime Minister.

Downer Woods: A nature preserve at UWM.

Electrabase: Ben’s attic room, the “capital” in 1994.

EM200: Revival in 2003 of the 200 seat Cosâ system of proportional representation.

Fifty-nine (59): Ben’s lucky number.

Florescia: Talossa’s smallest province, one of seven.

FM: Foreign Minister.

Fritzland: Micronation founded in 2005 by the CLP; it illegally calls itself “Talossa.”

FUN: *Front uni pour la Nation*, party founded 1985.

Glhep: The Talossan word for “language,” it is pronounced something like “yeth.”

Glib Room Empire: Rival micronation (1980).

Gruberia: Micronational “republic” founded in 2004 by the PC party and some former Penguinians; it illegally calls itself the “Talossa.”

GVB: “Glorious Victorious Ben,” his high-school nickname.

Haxh (pron. “hodge”). ‘Pilgrimage’ of a Cybercit to the Talossan homeland in Milwaukee. From Arabic.

Integrity: The ~: Newspaper founded by Davron.

King Robert I: See “Ben.”

Kingdom of Talossa: See “Talossa.”

KJK: Micronation founded in 1980.

KRI: King Robert I. See “Ben.”

L’Avintguárd: Short-lived ZPT paper.

Liberal Party (PL): Several dubious RT parties have gone by this now thoroughly discredited name.

Libs: Liberal Party members.

Loom of Language: Ancient language book; Talossan PM’s are sworn in on it, by tradition.

Maricopa: Talossa’s southwest province.

Maritiimi: Former province; see Maritiimi-Maxhestic.

Maritiimi-Maxhestic: Talossa’s southeast province.

MC: Member of the Cosâ.

Micronation: Any self-proclaimed independent state not widely recognized.

MN: The Black Hand (*La Mbà Nheagrâ*), nationalist, centrist party founded in 1985 and revived in 2002.

MP: ‘Minor’ity Party, founded 1992 by two “minors.”

Mussolini: Talossa’s northwestern province.

Napoleon’s: Till 2005, Wisconsin’s largest wargame and gaming store; former Talossan cultural mecca.

Neo-Nazis: Right-wingers obsessed with Hitler and Nazi symbolism and doctrines.

Old Growthers: Any Talossans who aren’t Cybercits. Most are from greater Milwaukee.

OpLeader: Opposition Leader, leader of the minority in the Cosâ.

Organic Law (1997): Democratic constitution.

Organic Law (1985): Undemocratic constitution.

OrgLaw: See “Organic Law.”

Päts Vräts (“Real Country”): 1989 name for the PC.

PC: Progressive Conservative Party. Talossa’s long-time ruling party, it collapsed ignominiously in 2004.

PCG: Grey Congress Party, lasted from 2002 to 2004.

PD: Prime Dictate. Law decreed by the PM.

Peculiar Way: 1989 party, successor to the DDP.

Pengöpäts: Talossa’s claims in Antarctica.

Penguinea: Micronation founded in 1997 by splitters from Talossa. It soon collapsed (but see Gruberia).

Për: A “yes” vote on a bill in the Ziu.

Për la Naziun: “For the Nation,” Talossa’s highest award, created in 1981.

PFPT: Peace and Freedom Party of Talossa. Pro-Penguinian party (1998).

PL: Liberal Party.

PM: Prime Minister.

Pocket Vote: Anyone less active than you, who votes against you, is somebody else’s “pocket vote.” A relatively meaningless term of abuse.

Pórt Maxhestic: Former RT province; see Maritiimi-Maxhestic.

Prime Minister: Leader of the majority party (or parties) in the Cosâ and head of the RT Government.

PUNK: People United for No King (1986 party).

RCT: Rally of the Citizens of Talossa, left-wing opposition party (1999-2003).

Real Cosâ: 20-seat Cosâ system, lasted 1997-2003.

Regent: Temporary appointee who holds the King’s powers while the King is abroad or underage.

Regipäts Talossán: Talossan for “Kingdom of Talossa.” Abbreviated “RT.”

Republic of Talossa: See “Gruberia.”

Rilampadâ: The 2007 reorganization of Talossa.

Riverside High School: Alma mater for many early Talossans, on Milwaukee’s East Side.

RPR: Rally for the Kingdom. Two pro-monarchist parties used this name in 1986-88.

RT: *Regipäts Talossán*, Kingdom of Talossa.

Secretary of State: The guy who runs RT government business. Immensely powerful dude.

SEIRP: Schneider’s Talossan Marxist Party (1991).

Senäts: The Talossan Senate, upper house of the Ziu.

Seneschál: Talossan language title of Prime Minister.

Soilitarians, Soilitariat: The Riverside High School core group that built Talossa in early 1980’s.

SoS: See “Secretary of State.”

SPP: Silver Phoenix Party. Final (1997) incarnation of the COP.

Stinkards: Ex-Talossans who still pretend to be Talossans.

STOMP: Schneider’s Talossan Marxist Party (1988).

Stötanneu: Newspaper published by Ben, off and on since 1980; became an online chat room in 2005.

Talossa: Kingdom founded in 1979 by Ben.

TalossaFest: Annual summer party of Talossanity.

Talossan Sea: Lake Michigan.

Talossanity: The state or quality of being Talossan.

TFTF: Talossa for Talossans Front, right-wing 1996 political pressure group that opposed Cybercits.

Thord: Micronation founded in 1980.

Three Strikes Law: Controversial law in Talossa that expels citizens who fail to vote in 3 straight elections.

TNN: *Talossan National News*, TNP newspaper.

TNP: Talossan National Party, right-wing political party (1985-1990) run by John Yahn.

Tory, Tories: Nickname for the defunct PC party.

Traitor: Anyone who quits the RT and attacks it.

Treisoûr: Dictionary of the Talossan language.

Tuîschac’h: Ceremonial President of the Senäts.

TZ: Newspaper column by Dan Lorentz, early 1980’s.

UP (1987): United Party. Merger of the PC and the MN. Later renamed PC.

UP (1991): Un-Named Party. The last party to defeat the PC (1992) before the MN (2003).

UWM: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

VIA Form: An absentee (“Vote in Advance”) ballot.

VOC: Vote of Confidence.

Vuode: Talossa’s heartland province, one of seven.

Vuode Palace: Ben’s father’s house on Prospect Avenue in Milwaukee (sold in 2007).

Witt, Wittenberg: Talossa’s former online chatroom.

Ziu: Talossa’s parliament (see Cosâ and Senäts).

ZPT: Defenders of the Land of Talossa. Left-wing party, founded 1996 and still existing in 2007.



“Stand Tall, Talossans!” (The Talossan National Anthem)
Words and Music: R. Ben Madison (Talossan 1992, English 2004)

Stand tall, Talossans, • *Sta là, zefença*
the peninsula defend. • *tú vell glhep Talossán.*
No foe nor villain • *Txamáis praitença*
can your love of country rend. • *da negar tú drept yumán.*
Raise high your banner, • *Ês ca’scù ziuá,*
your passion penned unto: • *ár propren glhep parlar;*
“Loyal to our sovereign, • *Sovenenç’ la tẓarâ,*
let our minds and hearts be true.” • *Talossán c’è ben d’estarë.*

Read by the torch of • *Va, desavërscha*
bright traditions red and green, • *Talossán sè grüilt travál.*
Our kingdom’s story • *Acest daßer’ha*
is yours to be lived and seen. • *ár voce nazjunál!*
Press, glhep and culture, • *Glhep da Talossa,*
a heritage of fun: • *aprenda, parla, scriütẓi;*
Send out the message • *fäts aceastâ cosâ,*
that’s inviting everyone! • *eda resta incognits!*

We are the future • *Noi sint l’espereux*
of this ancient, gallant land. • *dad ár anciînt glhep cortéis.*
Hold fast the fortress • *Mîntenença sondreux*
while citizen rolls expand. • *toct ár cînsvetüds vis-chéis!*
Watch on the river; • *Oxhi sonora*
raise the noble, fervent cry: • *la pliadâ antaloûr:*
“Go tell the nations • *“Crid’ cadascù porâ*
that no Cestoûr am I!” • *që eu non sint Cestoûr!”*

Ár Päts, Part One “Bones of Contention”

“...a community of persons having fun...”



1. What Talossa is, is a bone of contention. According to its 1988 *Constituziun* (“as amended”), Talossa is an independent, sovereign country in North America. In a 1993 referendum, a majority of Talossans agreed to call Talossa *“a community of persons having fun by doing things which are reasonably similar to what other (‘real’) countries do—whether for reasons of tourist nostalgia, out of a lust for power, in pursuit of parody—or, yes, as nation building.”* One much derided interpretation preferred to call Talossa a “weird thing” or “spiritual plasma,” without borders or other trappings of nationhood. And there are shades and gradations in between.

2. Where Talossa is, is easier to answer. Long ago, the glaciers melted away from a peninsula between the Milwaukee River and the Talossan Sea (known to some as “Lake Michigan”). Talossa’s territory is at the southern tip of this peninsula, an area about two miles wide at its widest point and four and a half miles long from its southern end to the US border in the ‘far’ north. Where it hadn’t been ploughed flat by urban sprawl, Talossa is packed with forests and hills. The country borders on Milwaukee and Shorewood, Wisconsin, USA, and enjoys a continental climate with four distinct seasons. Summers are beastly hot, winters bitterly cold—with lots and lots of snow—and spring and fall are rainy. Still, its people say, it’s home and we love it – and you will too, if you know what’s good for you.

3. Talossa has been home to many peoples, another bone of contention—except here we get into real bones. Ages ago, mound-building Indians roamed Talossa’s forests, killed some deer, and heaped up piles of dirt in at least two Talossan provinces. Ever since 1984, when a certain Talossan historian started his “research” on these ancients, the Kingdom has had a vague and (shall we say) controversial sense that these Indians were actually North African Berbers who sailed across the Atlantic and colonized America centuries—even millennia—before Columbus. Here these Berbers made corn tortillas and conquered the American desert Southwest, which, Talossans will tell you, is why the Kingdom of Talossa later voted to make “Taco Bell” its official national cuisine.

4. The “Berber Hypothesis” in all its full-blown kaleidoscopic pseudo-racial-lingual magnificence proclaimed that North African Berbers spawned the Megalith-builders of Stonehenge and the “Beaker Groups” of prehistoric Western Europe—and sailed across the Atlantic to Milwaukee. (Hey, there are real scholars who believe this. Trust us.) According to the official line, these Berbers called themselves “Talossans,” and left their name all over the place from *Tlemcen* and the *Atlas* Mountains in North Africa to *Tolosa* and *Catalonia* in Spain, to *Toulouse* in France, to the *Talayotic* culture of the Balearic Islands, all the way to the Moundbuilders of North America,

whom the Indians called the *Tellegwi* and who built their capital at *Aztalan*, Wisconsin. The same root *talo*, meaning “mound” or “house,” made its way into languages as far away as Finnish. And, of course, these Berbers left their genes coursing through the veins of our own European ancestors. The discovery of a 1,500-year-old Byzantine coin on Talossan soil in 1987 confirmed all this Berber stuff, for its believers, and “proved” that there was indeed contact between the ancient Mediterranean and the Talossan Peninsula. Later one of the country’s leading lights published *The Berber Project*, an elaborate textbook detailing just how Berbers settled America and much of Europe as well. Some modern Talossans enthusiastically embraced this vision of Talossa’s past, the product of research, study, and an overdose of Diet Barq’s Root Beer. Others, mostly German neo-Nazi types, rebelled against it with almost violent intensity, but as of this writing it’s 25 years in the making. The “Berber thing” is older than most Talossan culture and actually pre-dates the Talossan citizenship of most of its modern critics.

5. Talossa’s ancient inhabitants (Berbers or otherwise) were exterminated or driven out and the country was resettled in the early 19th century by French-Canadian fur trappers and traders, who were later supplanted by Americans and Germans—lots of Germans—who built up a city, “Milwaukee,” on and around the Kingdom’s intrinsically sovereign territory. Even then, however, life east and west of the river was different, and two separate towns of Milwaukee grew up. In 1845 the two towns actually went to war over who controlled the bridges across the river, with muskets and a cannon loaded with clock weights. Ever since then, the East Side—the side facing the Talossan Sea—has been a distinct society. Humour us if you please: call it an incipient national consciousness.

6. After the Bridge War of 1845, killjoy bureaucrats imposed a truce. Milwaukee was united and grew into a sleepy metropolis with curious traditions like Socialist mayors, squeaky-clean city government, and world-class museums, plus a peculiar local dialect of English in which drinking fountains are called “bubblers.” Beer became a major industry (as it was among the Beaker Groups). As the settlers kept coming, it seemed like Milwaukee was destined to be just another midwestern American city – an Indianapolis with a lake.

7. But in the 20th Century, *Talossan* families began moving into the area: Germans, Irish, Czechs, Swedes, Poles, and others. Most relevant to our story was one **Harry Madison** (1924-2006) of Louisiana, a direct descendant of the ancient Counts of Rouergue who had sat on the throne of mediæval Toulouse. His Swedish grandfather **Håkan Matteson** had married **Rhoda P. Easley**, a Canadian Tory of royal blood. Their grandson Harry settled on Talossan soil in 1956, arriving to teach psychology at the newly-created University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). He married **Jean Matters**, a local girl 17 years his junior, and on 2 July 1965 the couple produced a son, **Robert Ben Madison**, who would lead the Talossan people to glory and victory, back to their ancient Berber heritage, on to their destiny, or... wherever.

8. In 1973, the family moved into a stately white house on Prospect Avenue on Milwaukee’s trendy East Side (picture). It was in that house, in 1979, that our nation was (re)born. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Two “Afrocentrism, Talossan-Style”

“The problem in archaeology is when to stop laughing.”
– Dr Glyn Daniel, *Antiquity*, December 1961



1. **“NOS ANCÊTRES, LES GAULOIS...”** So began a famous French school history textbook: “Our ancestors, the Gauls.” French Blacks in the Caribbean were puzzled. “*Our*” ancestors? The answer was, *oui*, from a certain point of view. To be French is to share in a culture whose roots were (nebulously) shaped by the ancient merger of Gauls and Romans, even if one is not “genetically” Gaulish at all. So if the French find value in dredging up stories of the Gauls in order to make better Frenchmen of themselves and others, we wish them luck.

2. Talossa’s ancestral myth involves Berbers. In 1984, Ben Madison began what the *History of the Kingdom of Talossa* later called a “two-year comic delusion.” Inspired by an atlas of Jewish history, Ben wished that Talossa, like Jews and European nations, had an “ancient history.” Perhaps as a result of his anti-US ravings that year, Ben worried that Talossa was “fake” if it was only a “nation of immigrants.” In May 1984 Ben announced that the Talossan nation was somehow “descended from” ancient Celtic warriors in the French city of Toulouse (get it?). These Celts then sailed across the Atlantic, built Indian mounds in Lake Park, and were the “ancestors” of a Talossan “civilization” which was “restored” in 1979, just as Israel had been restored in 1948.

3. Serious work on “ancient Talossan history” began in the spring of 1985. Madison discovered that a Berber tribe in Morocco is called the *Talesinnt* (Abdel-Massih, xiii). Discovery of that name turned Ben’s Celts into North African Berbers. The first (1985) edition of the *History of the Kingdom of Talossa* spent 45 pages outlining how migrant Berbers had some hand in building Indian mounds in Milwaukee. The case was pretty weak, but ever since the spring of 1985 there has been a “Berber Hypothesis” floating around Talossa. Although it can be stated in different ways—usually the more bombastic the better—the Berber Hypothesis is best left as follows:

Ancient North African Berbers contributed to Talossan history through their ties to the prehistory of our European ancestors, and also by creating the ancient Moundbuilder culture on Talossan soil, thereby counting as Talossa’s “spiritual ancestors.”

4. In 1985 this became Talossa’s official “orthodoxy,” found in the *History* and in the pages of *Stotannen* and *Tú Phäts*. Berber words like *caciun* (“dog”) began infiltrating the Talossan language, and while the sceptical Talossan National Party demanded a repeal of what it called “24 chapters of rubbish and lies,” the Talossan-Berber connexion became a fact of Talossan culture. Mostly in the form of jokes or rolled eyes, Talossans forevermore would talk about Berber origins and

ancestry. Only Talossans can say “brrr-brrr!” on a cold day and get the pun. But by 1987, as new immigrants swelled the population of the Kingdom and helped us build a multi-ego culture, the Berber Hypothesis faded into ridicule. The second edition of the *History of the Kingdom of Talossa* wrote it off as patriotic fiction and actually touted “No Berbers!” as a selling point.

5. In late 1987, during a jaunt with his friends down to the Chocolate Factory at the Prospect Mall, Sandee Prachel discovered an old coin on Farwell Avenue near North Avenue. It was a *very* old coin: from the Byzantine Empire! Dated ca. 498 AD, it is now in the Talossan National Archives (photo). This bizarre discovery rekindled Ben’s whimsy about “ancient Talossa.” After all, this was “proof” that there was some link between the ancient Mediterranean and the very soil of Talossa. Jokes and speculation about Berbers and Berberdom escalated, and at last, in November 1994, with the extreme right and the extreme left voting in opposition, the Cosâ narrowly approved Ben’s “You Are What You Talk About, And You Talk About Berbers, Act”:

*WHEREAS, for the past decade, Talossans have argued about, lampooned, supported, written about, denounced, or backed, various wild theories about our supposed “Berber Ancestry”; and WHEREAS, whether we believe what Dan [Lorentz] called all this “pseudo-racial-lingual horsesh*t” or not, it has become part of the experience of being Talossan; THEREFORE: The Cosâ hereby resolves and proclaims, that in whatever vague and mysterious way, the Talossan people are inexplicably and inextricably connected somehow to Berbers and that such jokes, debates, and passionate nonsense about Berber heritage have become part of Talossa’s folk identity.*

6. In February 1996, after accumulating an M.A. in history, Ben examined the historical record again, to see if a vaguely plausible Berber Hypothesis could be argued. This book presents the shocking results of that investigation, using real sources written by real authors to show that the Berber Hypothesis is not too wacky to be plausible, but still wacky enough to be Talossan.

7. Talossa’s Berber history is a form of Afrocentrism, though it deals with White Africans rather than Black Africans. It traces our mythic heritage “out of Africa,” and it is partisan, polemical history with a heavy dose of wit. More broadly, it represents a long-established pattern through which dink peoples seek to acquire a glorious past by putting their own slant on history. As a former Talossan once said, “It is highly possible, and therefore true.” Whether Talossa’s Berber heritage represents Talossan scholarship or Talossan literature is for you to decide.

8. Modern nations are reaching out to their aborigines for cultural stimulus. Canadian products use fashionable Inuit names; Australians put didgeridoo music in tourist commercials. Hundreds of US states and cities have Indian names, insisting that the “Atlanta Braves” and “Marquette Warriors” honour the unbowed spirit of those who came before. There is no reason for Talossa to be any different. We are inexplicably and inextricably connected to Berbers. It’s part of being Talossan. Berber, Megalithic, Beaker, Visigothic, Donatist, Adena, Hopewell, Effigy Mound, Oneota and Mascouten art and customs are waiting for us to use, to build our own unique national identity. Laugh or genuflect; this ridiculous fusion of Talossans and Berbers is part of that identity. It is such an oddball association that even if it is not true, it ought to be. ●●●

**[Parts Three and Four are not included
in the online edition of Ár Páts.**

**For these chapters, please purchase
the complete printed edition.**

**Also, most illustrations have been removed
from the online edition to save bandwidth.]**

Ár Päts, Part Five (1600 BC-1391 AD)
“From Tarshish to Tolosa”

“...an incontestable unity of civilization...”

1. Alas, the Ibero-Euro-Berbers were reduced to a cluster of place-names after the massive Indo-European invasion from the east. What scholars call the “Únetice-Tumulus-Urnfield” culture (or Urnfielders, for short) appeared in Bohemia and was “marked by expansion.” By 1600 BC there was “extensive unrest” in the region and within 50 years the marauding, head-hunting Urnfielders exploded to the west (Castro, 123), annihilating the Berbers like the American Indian (Schutz, 133ff). These settlers of the upper Rhine, Gaul, and (eventually) Iberia were proto-Celts (Gimbutas, 339f); these invasions would generate a wave of refugees who fled to a place near and dear to our modern Talossan hearts.

2. In central Spain, many Beaker Group traits were preserved by what archæologists call the “Las Cogotes” culture (Castro, 132-138). The town of *Berbeia* is, not surprisingly, one of their most important sites (Castro, 132f). This Beaker Berber outpost began to fade after 1100 BC, when it was invaded by head-hunting Urnfielders (Castro, 123). By 700 BC, the Las Cogotes groups had been destroyed (Castro, 131-137).

3. Indo-Europeans crushed or absorbed the Berbers wherever they went. But the last organized Berber state in Spain regrouped and even flourished; the Bible speaks of *Tarshish*, an Iberian port on the Atlantic that was built by 1100 BC (Castro, 179). The native name for Tarshish was *Tarseia* (Warmington, 24), and as “r” and “l” were interchangeable in Iberian (Anderson, 122), the name was actually *Talseia*, i.e., “Talossa.” The Talseian alphabet was clearly derived from Berber (Jensen, 158f). But Talseia was conquered by the Punic Carthaginians, and later by the Romans; their language died out around the time of Jesus (Anderson, 131).

4. In Africa the Berbers are still around, of course, and they have made great contributions to world history. St. Augustine was a Berber, as was Donatus of Casæ Nigræ, founder of the “Donatist” Christian Church. In the 7th century the Arabs invaded; the Berbers embraced Islam and seceded from Western civilization. They established successful Moslem empires like the Almohads and Almoravids. Ironically the Spanish victory which sealed the doom of the Iberian Moors (most of whom were Berber) took place at Los Navos de *Tolosa* in 1212. Later on the Hilali Arabs invaded and ravaged North Africa, reducing it to the simplest sort of goat herding. Today Berbers are manning the front lines against Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria.

5. Other pockets of Berber culture, or at least Berber ancestry, survived in the fertile lands of southern France. Their history can be traced as far back as the 8th century BC, according to the oldest archeological evidence of human settlement. The location on the Garonne River offered trade with the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Around 700 BC, Celts overran the rest of Gaul, where the local Berber culture had become “stagnant and backward” (Trump, 220). But the

inhabitants of southern France retained their own traits; they population of the area “is fairly homogeneous and distinct from the rest” of France, a “north-south difference [which is] prominent both linguistically and genetically” (Cavalli-Sforza, 283f). This genetic distinction goes back all the way to Neolithic times (Cavalli-Sforza, 280). These locals were known as the *Tolosati* or *Tolosates*, as Julius Cæsar wrote in his famous account of the Gallic wars (*De Bello Gallico*, 1.10; singular *Tolosas*). And their capital city was *Tolosa* – the modern French *Toulouse*. This name, as noted before, goes back to the *Talesinnt* Berber tribe of Morocco (Abdel-Massih, xiii).

6. The Urnfielders never uprooted the Tolosans; instead, “a mixed culture” arose from contact between the two peoples (Wolff, 43ff). Around 220 BC, another Celtic Gallic tribe called the *Volcae Tectosages* arrived from Belgium or southern Germany, and came to dominate the Tolosa area, forming a political élite. But the local people retained their pre-Celtic identity, as shown by the fact that the arriving Celtic tribes called themselves *Combroges* (“fellow countrymen,” whence modern *Cymru*, “Wales”), while *Allobroges* (“foreigners” or non-Celts) also lived in the region. In spite of the ephemeral Celtic rule, the Tolosa area in pre-Roman times “presents an incontestable unity of civilization” (Wolff, 61). After 183 BC, Tolosa and its people fell under Roman rule. The native Berber speech, if it still existed, was replaced by Latin – a distinctive form of vulgar Latin which would evolve into the modern Occitan dialects of southern France.

7. By 418 AD, the Tolosa area was a “marginalized” backwoods province. The Romans had lost interest in it to the point where they agreed, that year, to hand it over to the Visigoths, one of their Germanic tribal allies (Ferreiro, 6f). The “separatist” native inhabitants, still genetically the old Neolithic population (Cavalli-Sforza, 280ff), embraced the Visigoths as liberators from Roman rule (Ferreiro, 9f). The local natives took up important positions around the Visigothic court and married Visigothic rulers (Heather, 34f). The Romans left Tolosa for good in 439, and by 451, the **Kingdom of Tolosa** was effectively a sovereign, independent state under a line of Visigothic kings (Ferreiro, 171f). Latin was the language of government (Heather, 37), but the African Berber character of the new Tolosan state was reinforced in the late 5th century when a massive wave of North African Christian migrants, including an exiled Bishop of Carthage, took advantage of the Visigoths’ reputation for religious tolerance (Ferreiro, 39). Traces of this influence can be found in modern Toulouse, where an ancient shrine to *Saint Africus* survived into the Middle Ages (when it was demolished by Calvinists); a large sector of the modern city is still called *Saint Cyprien* after the famous 3rd century North African bishop. Modern Talossa’s King Robert I and Queen Amy visited Toulouse in the fall of 2001.

8. In 507 Clovis, King of the Franks, invaded and defeated the Kingdom of Tolosa, chasing the Visigothic ruling house down into Spain. A rump Visigothic state survived there, but the Kingdom of Tolosa was no more. Visigothic noble families maintained some holdings, however, and **Bellon (Bel’ló or Belló) the Visigoth** (d. ca. 810) was the first known Count of Carcassonne, appointed by Charlemagne to that office (Lewis, 108). A descendant of the Visigothic Kings of Tolosa, Bellon stands at the head of the Bellonid Dynasty which reached its apex in **Wilfred the Hairy** (d. 987), founder of the House of Barcelona. Wilfred’s daughter

Gunhilde married Raymond II, Count of Toulouse (d. 924), and thus became the ancestor of all subsequent generations of the Rouergue Counts of Toulouse. Toulouse had re-emerged as a semi-independent county after 844, under a powerful hereditary line known as the **House of Rouergue**. Rouergue itself was a “densely gothicized area” (Heather, 108), but the Counts of Rouergue themselves were said to be of Frankish origin.

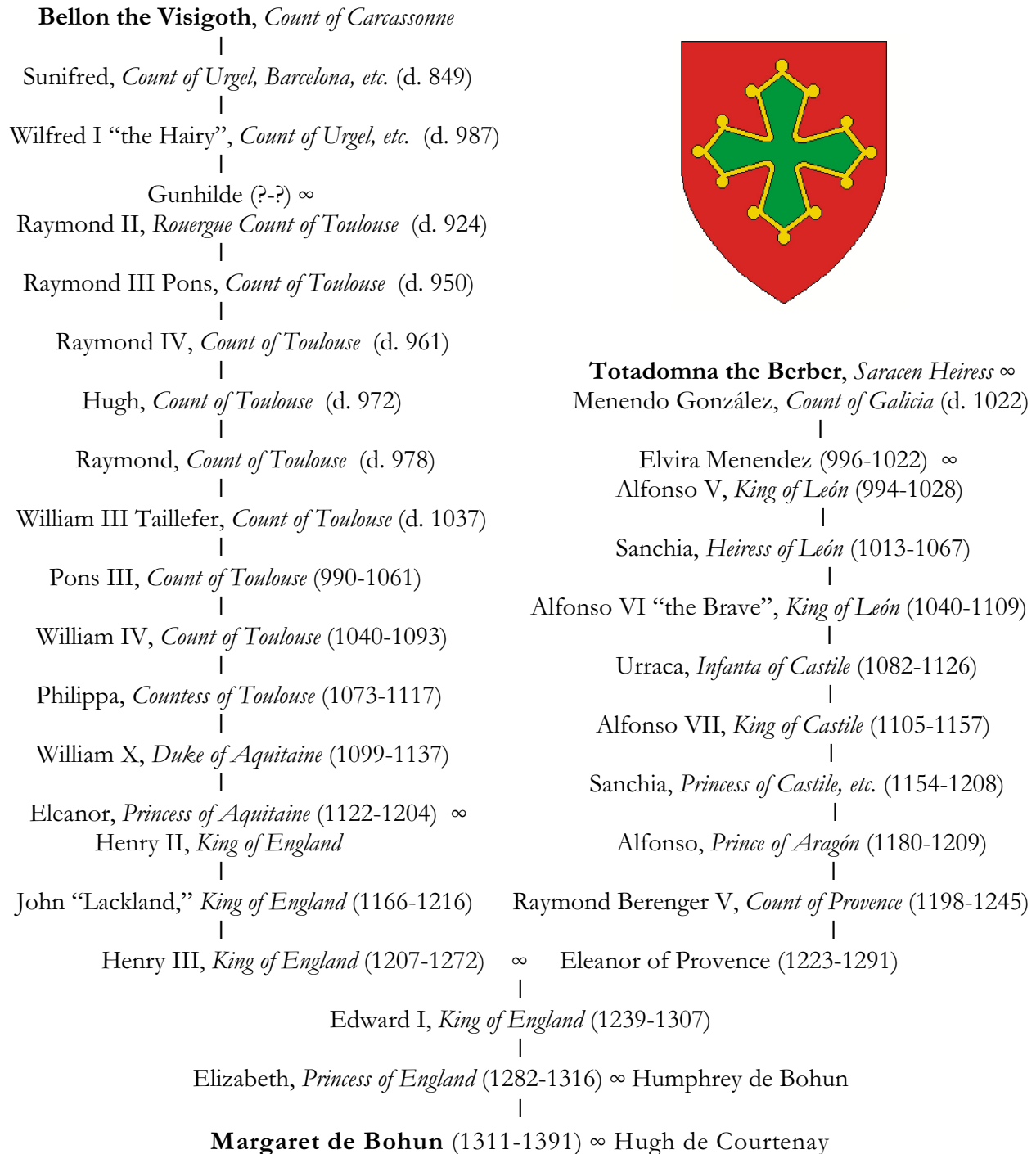
9. Meanwhile, Moslem Spain, which obliterated the last Spanish Visigoths, had come to be ruled (ironically) by Arabized Berbers from North Africa. By the 10th century these Berber families had intermarried with the rising Christian dynasties of the Spanish *Reconquista*. One such marriage took place around 995 AD, when Count Menendo González of Galicia married **Totadomna the Berber**, a famous Saracen heiress (Stuart, 144). Their half-Berber descendants were the powerful kings of León and Castile, whose heirs continue to rule Spain today.

10. Talossa’s modern-day ruling house bears the title of Rouergue. It traces its ancestry through the Rouergue Counts of Toulouse and the Berber-derived monarchs of Spain. The modern Talossan dynasty was formed thanks to the vagaries of mediæval English politics. **Eleanor of Aquitaine** (1122-1204) was the granddaughter of Philippa, a Rouergue princess from Toulouse who married into the ducal family of Aquitaine. The wife of King Louis VII of France, Eleanor was estranged from her husband after returning to France from Jerusalem during the Crusade of 1146. The marriage was annulled in 1152. Thereupon, Louis’ greatest rival, **King Henry II of England**, took her hand in marriage – a relationship dramatized by Peter O’Toole and Katharine Hepburn in *The Lion in Winter*. (Henry was descended from Bellon through another line, but Rouergue blood entered the English royal family through Eleanor of Aquitaine.)

11. Eleanor’s son was **John, King of England** (1166-1216). In turn, his son **King Henry III** (1207-1272) married another Mediterranean princess, **Eleanor of Provence** (1223-1291). This Eleanor was the son of **Raymond Berenger V**, Count of Provence, and a descendant of the kings of Castile and León, in Spain – and only nine generations removed from her ancestor, Totadomna the Berber. Finally, in the person of their son, **King Edward I of England** (1239-1307), the Visigothic and Berber lines of Bellon and Totadomna were united. Edward’s daughter **Elizabeth Plantagenet** (1282-1316; picture) married an English lord, Humphrey VIII de Bohun, 4th Earl of Hereford (1276-1322). Humphrey was a champion of *Magna Carta*, and a leader of the English reformists that sought to protect the people against royal tyranny.

12. Elizabeth bore many children for Humphrey. But the one most important to our story was their daughter **Margaret de Bohun** (1311-1391). This remarkable woman received a classical education under a Sicilian Greek, Master Diogenes. As a result, Margaret became a life-long scholar and avid book collector. She is a fitting ancestor for modern Talossans. Indeed, her genes live on in two of her most famous descendants: both modern Kings of Talossa, **King Robert I** (1979-2005) and **King Louis I** (2005-present). ●●●

Chart 1. The Royal Rouergue Lineage of Margaret de Bohun (1311-1391)
Progenitor of the Talossan Monarchy and
Joint Ancestor of Kings Robert I and Louis I of Talossa



* * *

**[Parts Six through Sixteen are not included
in the online edition of Ár Páts.
For these chapters, please purchase
the complete printed edition.]**

Ár Päts, Part Seventeen (1600-1842) “The Mysterious Mascouten”

“A mixed nation, claiming descent from these ancient Americans...”

1. What happened to the Elk Nation? This is the central question of Talossan archæology (Hurley, 399). One “small band” may have kept its identity into historic times: a “mysterious” tribe called the *Mascouten*. That name preserves the M-Z-K trilateral root, meaning “Free Men” or Berbers. The name is (like everything else about them) disputed. Hurons called them the “Fire Nation” (*Atsistarhonon*), while Algonquians called them “Prairie People” (Trigger, 671f). But *Mascouten* is clearly the same as the Berber *Imazighen*, the Latin *Mazices*, the Egyptian *Mashwash* and the Algonquian *Omaskkooz*: “Berbers” or “Elk Nation.”

2. Tracing Mascouten history is hard. In the early 17th century, when French records become available, groups of Mascouten are found in southern Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana and western Michigan. In spite of efforts to locate them all in Michigan prior to the Iroquois wars of the 1650’s, early Jesuit records clearly put Mascouten in Wisconsin in 1634, long before the Iroquois wars. The French report that the Mascouten joined with the Fox, Kickapoo, Miami and Ottawa Indians against the Winnebago in the Green Bay area and contributed to their downfall (Trigger, 668ff; Hall, 153; Baerreis, 267).

3. The Ottawa Indians remembered these “mysterious Mascouten” as Moundbuilders. Schoolcraft noted that they “*invariably referred to the Mascouten when questioned about ancient bones and caves, in the region of [Mackinac].... The Ottawas attribute to them the small mounds and the old garden-beds in Grand River Valley, and at other places; in short, they point to them for whatever in the antiquities of the country they cannot explain or account for*” (Baerreis, 266). In 1671 the French noted that the Mascouten were ‘different,’ calling them “more civilized and gentle” than their neighbours (Baerreis, 271). De-coo-dah said that ancient Talossans “dispersed in small bands to join one or another of the scattered tribes” (Pidgeon, 169). This is just what the historical record says about the Mascouten (Trigger, 668).

4. Explorer Jean Nicolet, writing in 1638, reported that “*Rasaouakouetons*” (Mascouten) lived in Wisconsin, on the shore of Lake Michigan (JR, 18:231). In 1679 there were some 20,000 here, comprising “as many as 12 nations” or tribes (JR, 61:149). In 1680-81, Father Zenobius Membré, exploring Lake Michigan with the French explorer Robert Cavelier de La Salle (picture), recorded in his diary that he had discovered “the nation of the Maskoutens” along with some Fox Indians “at about 43° north, on the banks of the river called Melleoki, which empties into Lake Dauphin [Michigan], very near their village” (Jones, 8f). This is the first record of Milwaukee, and La Salle said the area was thickly settled by Mascouten (Jones, 11f). In 1698 they had a “fort” somewhere in or near Talossa, which one anthropologist attempts to dismiss by claiming it was French (Jones, 13f). This was a typical Aztalan-type palisaded village, such as the French found on the Fox River at Green Bay, where one such Mascouten town had 3,000 inhabitants (Baerreis, 270; Trigger, 668).

5. During the historic period, of course, Mascouten Talossans were on the decline. Potawatami Indians migrated south from Green Bay into the Greater Talossan Area after 1680, moving in on the Mascouten. Little is known about Talossan history in this period because French *voyageurs* bypassed Talossa to the north and the south, largely ignoring the Kingdom’s territory (Jones, 13ff). Mascouten

leaders signed a peace treaty with the Iroquois in 1701 under French auspices, and many moved east to settle in Michigan. Here in 1712 the French, Ottawa and Potawatami Indians attacked a Mascouten settlement in the Detroit area; “hundreds” of Mascouten and Fox Indians were killed (Jones, 18ff). But the Mascouten retained their power-base in Talossa, and in 1721 they ruled the whole country between the Fox River of Wisconsin and the Illinois River (Jones, 20f).

6. Tragically, their Fox Indian “allies” drew the Mascouten into disastrous wars with the French. In 1728 the French launched a military expedition against the Fox in the vicinity of Talossa which destroyed Fox influence there (Jones, 21f). The surviving Mascouten allied with the Kickapoo and in 1735 both groups settled *en bloc* along the Illinois-Indiana border in the vicinity of the Wabash and Vermilion Rivers. Here they played the French and English off against each other and maintained their independence. There were still Mascouten trading in Green Bay as late as 1757 (Jones, 25), but the Potawatami moved into Talossa between 1750 and 1769 and completely drove our Berber Ancestors out of Wisconsin (Jones, 29 and 36). After the Seven Years’ War (1756-63) the Mascouten Berbers of Indiana swore loyalty to England but refused to fight in the American Revolution. In 1788 they were still a separate nation, trading with the Spanish at St. Louis. But by 1813 they had merged with the Kickapoo, their constant associates during the preceding century. By 1825 there were only Kickapoos, “of whom one tribe was called” Mascouten (Trigger, 669f).

7. The Mascouten language is “virtually unknown,” but on the basis of nothing whatsoever it is often assumed to be a dialect of Sac-Fox-Kickapoo (Trigger, 668). It is true that by the late 17th century the Mascouten could understand and talk in Kickapoo, after hundreds of years of influence (Baerreis, 252ff). In reality, according to French missionaries, the Mascouten spoke three distinct and different languages (JR, 61:149). This is, of course, highly significant, as we would expect them to speak three languages: Algonquian Kickapoo, Old American Berber, and North African Latin!

8. Some Mascouten preserved elements of Donatist Christianity as part of their belief system. Effigy Mound culture originated in a migration of Donatists from North Africa in the early 6th century. No sooner had the Mascouten tribe amalgamated into the Kickapoo, when a “new” religious movement began among the Kickapoo, called the “Kenekuk religion,” after its founder-prophet. The name “Kenekuk” may come from Latin *cana cuculli*, “the Mantle of Prophecy.” He taught that his people had *originally been Christians* but had allowed their Christianity to fall to pieces. “Shortly after his return, sometime in 1815, the Kickapoo Prophet began telling his people that they had wandered far from God’s teachings. For this reason the Great Spirit had abandoned them, and they had been defeated and dispersed in wars and had lost valuable lands” (Herring, 27).

9. Kenekukism bears an eerie resemblance to Donatism. Both were obviously Christian (Herring, 34f; Frend, v) but were derided by their enemies as “heathen” (Herring, 35; Frend, 239ff). Both believed in leadership by living prophets (Herring, 26ff; Monceaux, 4:157). Both saw their faith as a form of national revival (Herring, 27; Frend, 105). Both believed their movement to be the only true Christian Church, and denounced other Christians as impostors (Herring, 27f; Monceaux, 4:153). Both had a form of ritual resembling that of Roman Catholicism (Herring, 29; Monceaux, 4:134), but in other ways represented a return to “primitive Christianity” (Herring, 29; Frend, 227). Both Donatism and Kenekukism preached hell-fire and damnation (Herring, 31; Frend, 138) and both were severely penitential (Herring, 31; Frend, 20). Both were intensely devoted to the Bible (Herring, 30; Frend,

318ff). Both featured public confession of sin (Herring, 31; Monceaux, 4:148) and both used North African language in their worship (Fell 1980, 174; Frend, 335).

10. Even among the Kickapoo that rejected Kenekuk's re-packaging of their religion, their basic beliefs are profoundly Christian in origin. Their 'culture hero,' Wisaka, is the son of God – the son of the same God worshiped by Christians. He was born of a (Kickapoo) virgin, and holds the status of divine lawgiver. He was the creator of the world, fought with underground devils, drank wine, and taught commandments (Latorre and Latorre, 261ff). The name "Wisaka" is phonetically of the same ilk as "Jesus" (Aramaic: Yīšū'a). The two names both consist of semivowel-vowel-sibilant-vowel-glottal-vowel. The modification Yīšū'a → Yisa'a → Wisa'a → Wisaka is well within the bounds of normal linguistic evolution.

11. The use of Punic-language prayers is the most dramatic proof that the Kickapoo religion was a continuation of Donatist Christianity. Punic, of course, died out more than a thousand years ago in Africa; but when Donatist refugees left for America in the early 6th century, it was alive in cities like Carthage. Amazingly, it was still in use 1,300 years later in Kenekuk's religion. His disciples used "prayer sticks," wooden slats carved with pictures and letters, as a mnemonic aid to remember set prayers similar to the rosary (Herring, 32ff; picture, p. 43). Surviving examples of these prayer sticks were painted green and red: the national colours of the Kingdom of Talossa (Trigger, 663)! The characters on these Talossan-coloured prayer sticks are of even greater interest. Every prayer stick has exactly the same three groups of five letters each. These are almost perfect representations of characters from the North African Punic alphabet (NAKT Map 13a, illustration 5).

12. The prayer stick text reads 𐤒𐤓𐤓𐤓𐤓 in Punic. From right to left, these characters read *NQTb 'L* (the apostrophe ' is a sound in Punic, like a gulp in the throat). Supplying the appropriate vowels — Punic shares the ridiculous Semitic defect of not writing its vowels—allows us to pronounce it *naqethi 'el*. This literally means "Declare [me] to be exempt from punishment, O God" (Holladay, 15; 245). A less literal translation is "Lord have mercy": the ancient Christian prayer *Kyrie Eleison* (Greek for "Lord have mercy") which is repeated three times in the Liturgy, just as on the Kenekuk prayer sticks. Significantly, 19th century eyewitnesses to Indians using the prayer sticks noted that the chanted prayers were "all apparently unmeaning" (Herring, 34). Which of course they would be to 19th century Indians if they were being chanted in 5th century Tunisian Punic! To honour Kenekuk and his preservation of Berber culture and customs, the modern Talossan word for the *Kyrie Eleison* is *el Naqepiél*. The word is also modern Talossan for "good grief!"

13. It is clear that long before Kenekuk revived his religion, Mascouten and Kickapoo people used Christian prayer and ritual, while "consistently reject[ing] the overtures of Catholic and Protestant missionaries" (Herring, 28f). Because he rejects any Donatist Berber evidence, Herring tries to explain that contradiction away by claiming that 18th century Jesuits failed to convert the Kickapoo, yet for some reason the Kickapoo embraced Catholic ritual and practised it a century after they "lost contact with the priests" (Herring, 29). It makes more sense that these Indians had a form of Christian teaching and ritual that pre-dated the unsuccessful Jesuit conversion attempts.

14. The Kickapoo confederacy, which included the last native Talossans of Talossa, was itself broken up and dispersed in the 19th century. Several groups emerged, including a resolutely traditionalist branch that moved to Mexico and a largely pro-American group that still identified with Kenekuk and settled in Kansas. Neither group preserves any conscious trace of its Mascouten ancestry; they have lost their Talossan Berber heritage. After their “final dispersion” the North American Berbers scattered in many directions and united with many different peoples. De-coo-dah claimed that some of the “Elk nation” headed into the eastern part of the United States, settling in the region of the Alleghany Mountains (Pidgeon, 161f). And we learn that there was indeed a mysterious tribe called the “Tomahittans” (*Tamazight?*) living in the Alleghany as early as 1674. Significantly, they spoke an unknown language (Trigger, 587 and 638).

15. Other Talossan Berbers stayed home, uniting with the Winnebago, a Siouan tribe from the west that migrated into the Green Bay area of Wisconsin. Although the Siouans were “completely foreign to Wisconsin” (Birmingham and Eisenberg, 149), there was obvious cultural contact between Winnebagoes and Talossans. An example can be seen in NAKT, Figure 1, which shows a prehistoric Berber pot bearing the distinctive emblem of Tanit, the nurturing mother-goddess of the Berber people. Figure 2 shows the very same emblem, found centuries later on a Winnebago Indian mat. Obviously the Winnebago derived a part of their culture from Berber influence.

16. The Winnebago did *not* build Talossa’s mounds (Mason, 364), but this has not stopped some scholars from bending themselves into pretzel-shapes trying to “prove” that the Winnebago *were* the Oneota. It started in the early twentieth century when the otherwise brilliant Paul Radin made this equation a personal pet project. Although the Winnebago provided only garbled accounts of the Indian mounds, even claiming that they were “foundations for longhouses or fortifications” (a self-evident absurdity; see Birmingham and Eisenberg, 37), Radin himself has the dubious honour of actually convincing the Winnebago that they built the mounds (Ibid., 39)! Birmingham and Eisenberg are among the biggest proponents of the Winnebago=Oneota theory today, and put forth all sorts of wild speculation in order to shoehorn Oneota beliefs into Winnebago categories. Typical of this are their claims to find “representations of the earth” in “vertical and, especially, horizontal lines” on Oneota pottery (Birmingham and Eisenberg, 169f).

17. The Winnebago are a very arrogant and secretive group (Ben Madison was told by a Winnebago elder that he could not buy a their language books because he did not belong to their tribe) and were famous in the 17th century for cannibalism, sexual excesses, bestiality, warlike fanaticism, treachery, emotional outbursts, and egotism. They were also “very disgusting about their food” (Hall 1:163ff). The key to the mystery lies in their name: “Winnebago” means “Stinkards” or “People of the Stinking Water.” Of course, “Stinkards” simply refers to the lower-class slaves who served the Black Tortoise (Waldman, 21f). The Winnebago were former serfs of the Black Tortoise, and migrated into Wisconsin after the collapse of that mighty empire after 1275. They were not Oneota; as Henning puts it, they took on some cultural attributes of

the Oneota (Henning, 353).

18. There was evidently a late connexion between Talossans and Winnebago. There is or was an Elk “clan” within the Winnebago nation, and its legends seem to suggest that the Elk “people” were at some time separate and that they later joined up with others at the Red Banks of Green Bay to contribute to the formation of the Winnebago nation. The Winnebago never really accepted the ancient heritage of the Elk nation, and dismissed the ancient traditions of these last pitiful Talossans as “idle tales” (Pidgeon, 146). But perhaps De-coo-dah’s reference to a former splintering of the Elk Nation to live with other tribes after their final dispersion refers to the same circumstances described in the Winnebago Elk clan origin myth (Salzer, 112). Significantly, the French reported intermarriage between the Winnebago and the Mascouten (Baerreis, 276).

19. The last of the fallen was De-coo-dah. He was born ca. 1751; no one knows where. “De-coo-dah,” says Pidgeon, “was of low stature, unusually broad across the shoulders and breast, his complexion somewhat darker than the Winnebago, with a large mouth and short chin; his limbs were well-proportioned, and he possessed undaunted courage.” His ancestors were marabouts: “he claimed no lineal kindred with any nation now in existence, but was a descendant from the Elk [i.e. “Berber”] nation, now extinct; that they were a mixed nation, claiming descent from those ancient Americans, the mound-builders; and that their traditions were sacredly kept by their prophets [marabouts], from a family of whom he was descended.” Also known as “Mockingbird,” he spoke five languages including the “Elk Language,” a form of North African Latin akin to modern Talossan. He regularly travelled among several tribes, and passed on to Pidgeon the knowledge he learned from his great-grandfather, who died before the American Revolution (Silverberg, 142). His words, in a nearly extinct Romance language, prove there were Latin-speakers in prehistoric Wisconsin, and his brave prayer – “God save the King, God save the people” – gives the Kingdom of Talossa an ancient affirmation of monarchy and democracy united in the heart of a patriot.

20. When De-coo-dah died in 1842, he was laid in a burial mound near Lake Superior (Silverberg, 148). But he was hardly the last Talossan. Only 14 years later, a young Swedish immigrant named George Madison, a descendent of the Maglemose Berbers of Mesolithic Europe, settled not far away, in northwestern Illinois. On 26 December 1979, George’s great-grandson, Robert Ben Madison, founded modern Talossa in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the heart of Little Otter’s domain – and he is still a part of it today. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Eighteen (1135-1979)
“Loyal to Our Sovereign: Talossa’s Royal Family”

“Shoot the Republicans!”

1. Ironically, the European takeover of *La Visconça* brought English heirs of the ancient Berber kingdoms to modern Wisconsin. Two such families, the Durnfords and Madisons, trace their lineage back to Margaret de Bohun (Part 5). Talossa has been built around these two families since 1979.



2. Under RT law, the King of Talossa must be a descendant of the ancient Rouergues. **King Louis I** (1997-) has reigned since 2005 as the Kingdom’s lawful monarch and head of state. Louis first joined Talossa on the coattails of his grandmother, **Amy Kathleen Durnford** (1954-), who married the country’s modern founder, King Robert I, under Talossan law in December 2001 (picture). Styled Queen Amy since then, Durnford was elected Regent in April of 2008 to look after the interests of young King Louis during his minority (see Part 65).

3. Amy and Louis descend from an ancient English family. The 13th century *Liber Niger Scaccarii* notes that a Roger de Derneford (b. 1135) held the fifth part of a knight’s fee in Wiltshire in 1165. Great Durnford, the ancestral village, lies in the lovely valley of the River Avon, near the Berber megalithic complex at Stonehenge (picture, p. 13). The old Anglo-Saxon name means “Hidden Ford,” after the town’s place on the river. King Robert and Queen Amy visited Great Durnford in May 2004 during a Talossan state visit to England. There is also a direct connection between the family and Berber North Africa: **“Cape Durnford”** is a fertile region in the former Spanish Sahara, on the peninsula of Rio de Oro (the principal Spanish settlement, approx. 23° 50' N., 16° W.)

4. As servants of the English Crown, the Durnfords have an illustrious, if not terribly successful, military history. Elias Durnford (1739-1794) was Lieutenant-Governor of British West Florida in the Revolutionary War, and surrendered the city to Spanish forces in 1790. His son, Elias Walker Durnford, built the Rideau Canal in Ottawa, Canada. A cousin, Col. Anthony William Durnford (1830-1879), commanded forces in South Africa at the Battle of Isandlwana, where a British army was annihilated by the Zulus. (In the film *Zulu Dawn*, Col. Durnford is played by Burt Lancaster!)

5. The American pioneer of the family was Alfred Durnford (1818-1898), born in Peckham, near London. His father, Andrew Montague Isaacson Durnford, was lieutenant-colonel in the Third Guards, British army. Alfred worked for several years as a parliamentary lawyer in London. In 1854 he and his wife Annie emigrated and became some of the earliest settlers of Richland County, Wisconsin. Here he practised law and served as a justice of the peace. His son Frederick moved to Oconomowoc in Waukesha County. Frederick’s grandson, Holiday Durnford (1931-) married Helen Quay (1930-), a direct descendant of Margaret de Bohun. Their daughter Amy, and her grandson Louis, descend from this union. The royal lineage of King Louis is found in Chart 3.

6. Of more immediate significance to the (re)founding of the Talossan state was another Rouergue

line (Chart 2). This is **Robert Ben Madison**, founder of Talossa in 1979 and the country's **King Robert I** until his own abdication (in favour of King Louis) in August, 2005. Ben's line descends from Margaret de Bohun (1311-1391, his most recent common royal ancestor with Amy Durnford) through the Luttrell, Yorke and Percival families. The ancestry of colonist Percival Lowell (1570-1664) was proven beyond doubt by Brandon Fradd and Douglas Richardson, "The Royal Ancestry of Percival Lowell," in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* vol. 157 (October 2003).

7. Lowell and his Puritan clan settled in Massachusetts. A great-great-granddaughter, Molly Brown (1743-1835), fifteen generations removed from Margaret de Bohun, married Zebulon Estey (1742-1826), son of Richard Estey (1706-1791). Their daughter Molly married her cousin, Amos Estey, a descendant of Mary Towne Estey (1634-1692), one of the women famously executed on false accusations of "witchcraft" in the Salem Witch Trials. After the French and Indian War, the Esteys of Rowley, Massachusetts became pioneers again, settling in the virgin forests of New Brunswick, where they helped establish the town of Maugerville on lands conquered from the French.

8. After 1775, in the chaos of the American Revolution, the entire province of New Brunswick remained loyal to the Crown. When the "rebels" were victorious and the United States established its independence in 1783, some 100,000 "Tory" Americans on the losing side of the rebellion took whatever they could carry and fled the United States. Many ended up in New Brunswick, where Amos and Molly bore a son, James, on 20 March 1796 at Kingsclear, York County. On 16 November 1820, near the capital of St John, James married Abigail Knapp, from a family of Tory exiles of Pennsylvania Dutch descent. Abigail's father, Michael, had fought for the British Empire against the Americans in a Loyalist regiment, The Prince of Wales's Loyal American Volunteers.

9. Fortunately for Talossa, the Esteys and Knapps found making a living hard in New Brunswick. During the 1830s they moved back to the USA, settling in frontier Ohio. Their Rouergue-descended daughter, Rhoda Permilla Estey (1830-ca. 1880) married Silas W. Wilson, a railway worker. And *their* Rouergue-descended daughter, Emily J. Wilson (1852-1895) married a Civil War veteran, Swedish immigrant Håkan Matteson (1840-1914), who was trying to assimilate and called himself George H. Madison. "George" was born in the Swedish *torp* of Jämshög and came to Illinois with his family in 1854. While his brother settled in a Swedish town in Nebraska and married a Swedish Lutheran girl, George set out on his own to Arkansas, married a half-Canadian Tory girl, and changed his name. If monarchist, Loyalist attitudes were passed down through the family to future generations of Madisons, it must have been subtle. Their son, Benjamin Lee Madison (1884-1967) worked his whole life in the sawmills of Arkansas, Tennessee and Louisiana.

10. In 1923, Ben married Hattie Easley (1903-1994), granddaughter of a disgraced Confederate soldier who switched sides. Hattie's North Carolina roots may reveal more Talossan Berber roots. Her grandmother was Martha Elizabeth Castile (b. 1843), and Castile (or Casteel) is a common name among the Melungeons of the Appalachian South (Kennedy, 172). The swarthy Melungeons are Christianized Berbers who settled the Carolinas under the Spanish in 1567 and then "went native" after Spanish rule collapsed (Kennedy, 108ff). In the racially stratified Old South, such ancestry was covered up; Hattie passed away before her grandson could press her on the issue.

11. Ben and Hattie had their first child in 1924. **Harry Lee Madison** (1924-2006) was a precocious political rabble-rouser who agitated in high school (class of 1941) for a declaration of war on Nazi Germany, and spent the rest of his life as a psychology professor championing a variety of liberal and left-wing causes. (His college slide rule, from around 1950, reads “*Shoot the Republicans!*”) A veteran of World War II, Harry’s career took off thanks to the G.I. bill, and in 1958 he was able to leave the segregated South he loathed when a teaching position opened up at the new University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), in what is now Talossa’s Atatürk Province. On Milwaukee’s trendy East Side, Professor Madison met a girl 17 years his younger, **Jean Dorothy Matters** (1940-1979), daughter of a corporate mathematician of Cornish and Norwegian descent. They married in 1964 and had two children: **Robert Ben Madison** (1965-) and **Jennifer Madison** (1969-).

12. Tormented by idiotic bullies in grade school, Ben entered high school in 1978 and discovered politics. After his mother’s sudden death, he wrote florid manifestos plotting a perfect world where ‘normal’ citizens (i.e. shy, law-abiding, sport-hating atheist brainy sci-fi fans as Ben was at the time) would be protected from bullying, vandalism, fundamentalism, “sport-infested youth,” the lack of public health care, and the sort of me-first anarchy he associated with America, capitalism, religion and democracy. A trip to Iceland and Germany in early 1979 convinced him that America’s “corrupt culture” had to be crushed and defeated so he and the world could live in peace and quiet.

13. Teenage Ben called himself a communist, a fascist, and a socialist at one time or another. The flags, uniforms and symbols of these movements appealed to him. Fascinated by languages, Ben suggested that America’s culture could be improved by changing the national language to Finnish, a loony attempt to prove the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. In mid-1979 he wrote *Usille Viljelykselleme* (“For Our New Culture”), a screed blaming America’s woes on organized religion and phy-ed classes. His one-man “*Cultural Revolutionary Party*” called for “a new culture, where all people are created equal, with the same rights and responsibilities, [including] equal rights for women and minorities.” Violence could all be traced back to gym class, in which kids were taught to “**beat the opponents**”, a recurrent phrase in this tiresome booklet. (One would never guess that Ben would one day be a Milwaukee Bucks season ticket holder as well as an ordained Christian lay minister!)

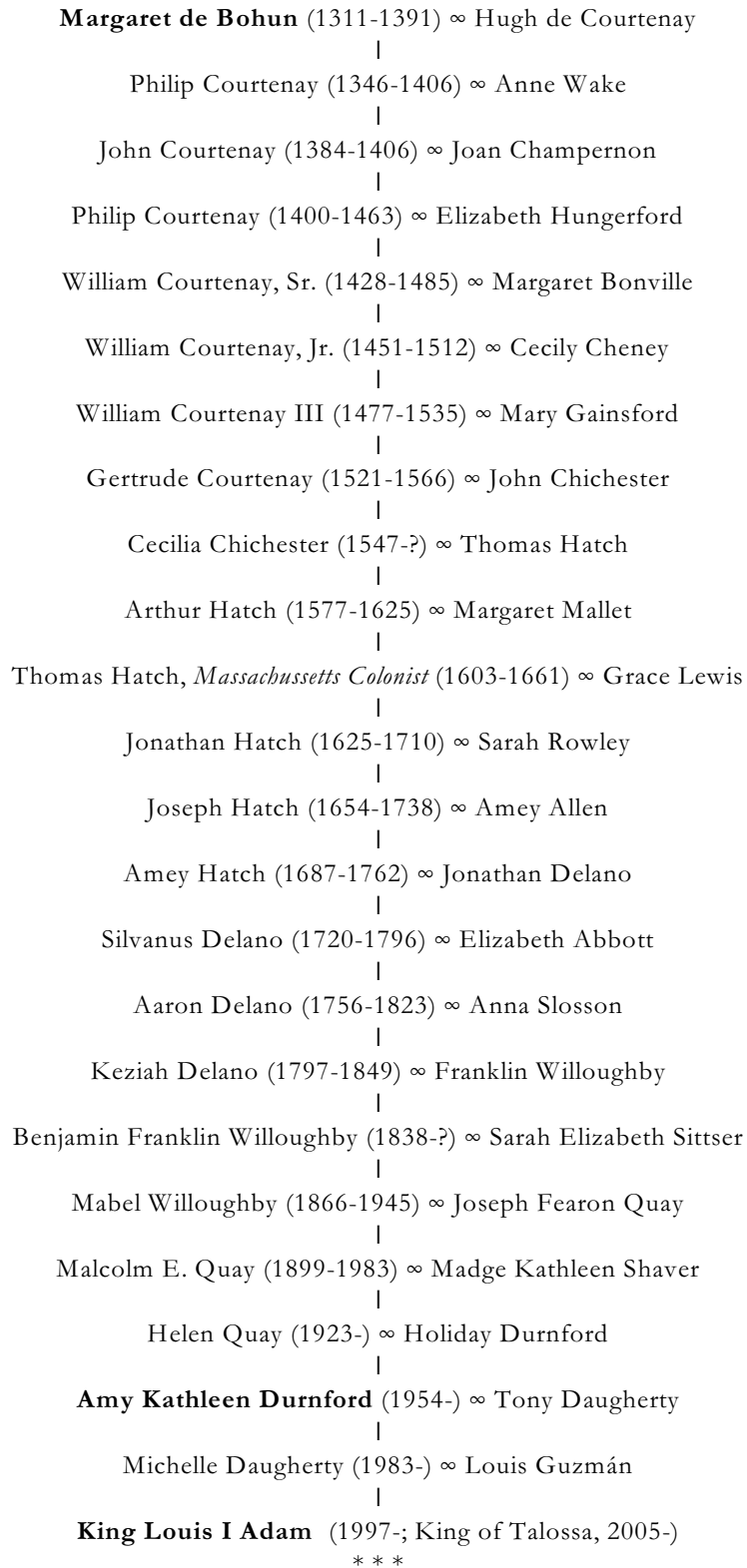
14. Ben’s first foray into politics had a dark side – the book illustrates torch-wielding blue-shirted kids burning down churches – but its basic social-democratic message stuck with Ben for the rest of his life. “To come to power in a non-democratic method is totally terrible,” he wrote. But Ben’s plan to transform the USA into the “Thought Empire of American Allied Imperial Democratic Social Republics” was obviously going nowhere. In early December of 1979, when Ben was 14, he found himself at Milwaukee’s downtown library, reading about Esperanto. As the bored Madison ruminated on his adolescent dreams of a perfect tolerant society, he had an idea that would change his life for ever: “*You can’t change America, you can’t leave America: So secede from America.*” ●●●

Chart 2. The Royal Rouergue Lineage of H.R.M. Robert I, King of Talossa (1979-2005)

Margaret de Bohun (1311-1391) ∞ Hugh de Courtenay
 |
 Elizabeth Courtenay (?-1395) ∞ Sir Andrew Luttrell
 |
 Sir Hugh Luttrell (1364-1428) ∞ Katherine Beaumont
 |
 Sir John Luttrell (1394-1430) ∞ Margaret Tuchet
 |
 Sir James Luttrell (1426-1461) ∞ Elizabeth Courtenay
 |
 Sir Hugh Luttrell (?-1521) ∞ Welthian Yarde
 |
 Eleanor Luttrell (1495-1531) ∞ Roger Yorke
 |
 Elizabeth Yorke (1515-1601) ∞ Edmund Percival
 |
 Christianna Percival (?-1577) ∞ Richard Lowell
 |
 Percival Lowell, *Massachusetts Colonist* (1570-1664) ∞ Rebecca
 |
 John Lowell (1604-1647) ∞ Elizabeth Goodale
 |
 Benjamin Lowell (1642-1714) ∞ Ruth Woodman
 |
 Joseph Lowell (1680-1736) ∞ Mary Hardy
 |
 Marcy Lowell (1718-?) ∞ Francis Brown
 |
 Molly Brown (1743-1835) ∞ Zebulon Estey
 |
 Mary (Molly) Estey, *Canadian Tory* (1767-1844) ∞ Amos Estey
 |
 James Estey (1796-1858) ∞ Abigail Knapp
 |
 Rhoda Permilla Estey (1830-?) ∞ Silas W. Wilson
 |
 Emily J. Wilson (1852-1895) ∞ George Holcomb (Håkan) Madison
 |
 Benjamin Lee Madison (1884-1967) ∞ Hattie Easley
 |
 Dr. Harry Lee Madison (1924-2006) ∞ Jean Dorothy Matters
 |
King Robert I Ben (1965-; King of Talossa 1979-2005) ∞ **Amy Kathleen Durnford**

* * *

Chart 3. The Royal Rouergue Lineage of H.R.M. Louis I, King of Talossa (2005-)



År Päts, Part Nineteen (December 1979-February 1980) “The Spirit of ’79”

“A Man’s Room is his Kingdom”



1. 14-year-old Ben spent two weeks planning his move. He decided to take his bedroom and declare it to be an independent, sovereign state. At first he wanted to call it Seltsam (‘silly’, in German), but instead settled on **The Kingdom of Talossa**, “*talossa*” being Finnish for “inside the house,” the perfect euphonic name for a bedroom nation. (It was first mistranslated as Talossä, a spelling found in the first two weeks of the country’s history). In the week leading up to Independence Day, Ben designed or chose all the symbols of the new state. First was the national anthem, one of the soon-to-be-King’s favourite songs, Fleetwood Mac’s “Tusk.” This mixture of rock ’n roll, university marching band sounds, and tribal grunts seemed to suit the unusual country in the making. Ben had also discovered a Chinese character pronounced *ben*, meaning “energetic, strenuous, and brave.” For obvious reasons, this “Ben Symbol” became part of our coat of arms (see p. 2).

2. Influenced perhaps by Christmas, Ben chose horizontal stripes of white, green and red, with a red Ben Symbol in the corner, as the national flag. Soon the King would boast that every Independence Day, Milwaukee was festooned with Talossa’s colours! Ben headed to a local convenience store to buy white, green and red fabric which he sewed by hand into Talossa’s first flag. Pieces of it still exist, a kind of “holy relic.” But the flag looked too much like Bulgaria’s, so later the white stripe was taken off, leaving just green over red as Talossa’s unique national flag. “A Man’s Room is his Kingdom” became the national motto; the budding linguist translated it into slightly botched Finnish as *Miehen Huone on Hänen Valtakunta*, often shortened to “MHHV.”

3. Independence Day was 26 December 1979. At 7:00 PM, the King’s father and sister Jennifer assembled with several other relatives at Ben’s Prospect Avenue home, where Talossa’s flag was draped across the coffee table. Ben’s friend **Gary L. Conâ**, whom Talossa recognized as the US Ambassador, entered the room. Next came Robert Ben Madison, in the blue suit he wore to debate meets, done up with paper medals and ribbons. For a crown, he bought an ancient blue Milwaukee fire department dress hat at a used bookstore for \$3.00. A friend called it the “Romanian train conductor’s hat.” Madison read a brief speech (since lost) about his new nation. Then, in his first official act, this high school sophomore read a Declaration of Independence proclaiming Talossa’s secession from the United States: “*I, Robert I, his royal me, proclaim the Kingdom of Talossa to be an independant [sic] unit the the [sic] master plan of World Singular Secession. In doing so, I am seceding from the United States of America.*”

4. Fastening the blue hat upon his head, Ben was transformed into His Royal Majesty, King Robert I of the Kingdom of Talossa, and a second floor bedroom in an American house became a free and independent nation, while “Tusk” was played and champagne toasts were enjoyed downstairs.

6. The Kingdom was first ruled as a “democratic dictatorship” by its only citizen, King Robert. His Constitution in its entirety proclaimed: “*ARTICLE ONE: All power of law, finance and anything else is vested*

in the King. ARTICLE TWO: This constitution is perfect and shall have no need of amendment."

7. After the ceremony Madison went to his room through the door that was now an international frontier. He hung the flag on his dresser and typed a Talossan "phone book," in pidgin Norwegian, which was declared the official language in an effort to make the country more "foreign." He set to work on official money, and founded *Stotannet* (Norwegian for "the Tusk") as the Kingdom's official newspaper, though it had not yet been printed. The paper was not listed as a daily or a weekly, but as an "evently." A typed page of "Facts and Data" dated 31 December 1979 described Talossa's topography as "plaster walls, wooden floor," and under the heading 'Economy' it said: "All finance is governed by the King's father." "Although the constitution does not call for it," the document continued in the dizzyingly self-referential style that would mark decades of Talossan publications, "King Robert I is planning the election of a parliament to 'better govern the workers of Talossa.' The country has a strong Communist party, but the King's beliefs are anti-Communist." The parliament, or Riksdag, consisting of Ben, met on 5 January 1980 and voted 'unanimously' to make Icelandic the new national language, a sign of Ben's life-long fascination with Iceland, which he visited briefly in early 1979. These humble documents filled the first folder of what later became Talossa's National Archives, which today has over 10,000 pages of letters, newspapers, election ballots, linguistic ramblings, poetry, and political party propaganda leaflets.

8. Madison invited all people to secede and form their own countries, a goofy plan for 'world peace' which Madison called "World Singular Secession" in an effort to give Talossa an official ideology. But his own ideology, which flirted with repressive atheism rather than world peace, led the King on 11 January 1980 to declare himself officially "deposed": the Kingdom was proclaimed a Communist People's Republic. Enver Hoxha, the despotic head of Albania, was teenage Ben's newest hero, and he attempted to rework Talossa in Albania's evil image. The one lasting gift for Talossa from the "People's Republic" was the tradition of Talossan journalism, which began with *Dårliget Løgner* ("Dirty Lies"), the hand-drawn Talossan version of *Pravda* which was just as reliable, reporting for instance the defeat of "American imperialist forces" in Ben's closet.

9. After less than a month, Ben decided that Talossan communism was boring. He issued a colorful broadside, "*A Call to the Oppressed People of Talossa*," on 9 February. "Revolt against the vicious Communist rule!" Ben demanded of himself. "Restore power to the King!!" Ben gave up his tongue-in-cheek Communism and proclaimed himself King again on 11 February. "The King was reported to have said nothing," the Talossan press reported, "at least in any known language." *Stotannet*, the new monarchist paper, reported that the King had also dissolved his one-man parliament. Though at first crudely hand-drawn, this newspaper (now called *Stotannen*, pronounced "sto-TAH-new") was published almost without interruption – after 1996, on the Internet – until it morphed into the country's online chat room in 2005. ●●●

År Päts, Part Twenty (February-November 1980) “The Battle of the Garage”

“You have incurred my wrath!”

1. After February 1980 Talossa lay dormant. Its bored King started reforming Esperanto and writing authoritarian “Regulationist Party” manifestos in a dubious effort to Benize America.
2. But that summer, Madison, now 15, found his interest in Talossa returning. While visiting his ranting right-wing uncle Shelby in Birmingham, Alabama, he wrote a two-page booklet of ‘facts’ and data. After Ben returned to Talossa in August, his hand-written *Stotanneu* claimed Talossan astronauts had reached the moon! He soon discarded this issue and resolved that Talossa and fiction were incompatible. On 1 September 1980 he began to put out issues of *Stotanneu* with some regularity, and has done it, off and on, in some form, ever since.
3. In those days, the paper reported little more than the shifting of Talossa’s cultural sand: the national language going from Norwegian to Greek and so forth, the anthem changing to one Abba song or another, or mysterious headlines proclaiming “Social Upheaval Stuns Talossa!” and reporting that “Talossa was stunned by social upheaval today.” While King Robert plugged “World Singular Secessionism” at every turn, his friends resisted his blandishments to declare their own little bedroom countries. It was clear that a one-man country had very little to do but change its symbols and policies and pretend this was progress and history.
4. But in September 1980 there appeared a glimmer of weird light on the horizon that thrust Talossa into the spotlight of Ben’s friends. Gary Conâ was fired as US ambassador for “vehemently” lying about his religion to the King: Conâ pretended to be an atheist but was in fact a choir boy and self-described “socialist Methodist” who supported Reagan (whom the King detested). *Stotanneu* claimed the firing averted “Talossa’s first political scandal.” The aggrieved Conâ skulked off to form his own sovereign state: the Glib Room Empire. Talossa was born of a desire to oppose boredom, but the Glib Room seemed destined to oppose King Robert and Talossa. *Stotanneu* warned that the new nation was in fact a repressive Methodist state that threatened the peace of humanity.
5. On 24 September 1980, an upswelling of political boredom saw the King again “depose” himself in the so-called “Third Talossan Revolution” or “ÜTD.” Ben proclaimed Turkish the official language and Talossa was now said to be a republic, devoted to the authoritarian ideals of Turkish reformist despot Kemâl Atatürk, who had replaced Enver Hoxha as the ‘ideal leader’ of the ex-King’s dreams. His left-wing friend **Bob Murphy** claimed that “Ben is a fascist who likes to change his name just to confuse and suppress the people.” This only lasted a few weeks, and on 8 October ‘Grand Governor’ Madison quietly became King again. Antarctica and Portugal, which the country had furtively annexed during its brief Atatürkist period, were formally returned to their rightful owners. *“I will see to the best of my ability,”* Ben wrote, *“that this Throne shall never fall again.”*
6. The country’s paper replaced Atatürkist dogma with exhortations to quash or laugh at Conâ’s Glib Room Empire. That wasn’t hard, and Madison and his friends played pranks at Riverside High School on the extroverted, nerdish Conâ, who served as library monitor—or “library moron,” as Madison rewrote Conâ’s hall pass to read. This provoked Conâ to hurl the great works of Western Civilization

at the King in the library one day, while cackling “*You have incurred my wrath! Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!*” as an ever larger audience gathered to laugh at Conâ.

7. Ben survived the incident unscathed, but Conâ next lashed out at Ben’s younger sister Jennifer, and tripped her on the pavement after church! Though Ben and his sister were never close, the unending stream of verbal and physical abuse from Conâ and his Glib Room *reich* drew a retaliatory response from Talossa in the form of a formal declaration of war against the Glib Room on 18 November 1980, after what *Stotannen* billed as “deep thought.”

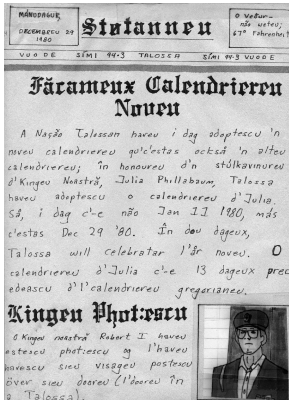
8. Talossa’s war, which so far consisted of an occasional glower, was joined on 21 November when the vacant US Ambassador post was taken up by a new Royal friend, **John Yahn**. Described in *Stotannen* as a “warped, egotistical fascist,” Yahn was a raving Nazi racist whose amiable character saved him from total condemnation. Yahn announced that he would form the “KJK,” a World Singular Secessionist state, apparently for the sole purpose of making war on the infernal Conâ. **John Eiffler**, another Riverside pal of the King’s, though of substantially more liberal leanings, also made plans for a “Kingdom of Thord” to join Talossa and the KJK in a “League of Secessionist States” (LOSS) united by their opposition to Conâ. It all came to be called the “Conâ Wars,” a name inspired by the Clone Wars of the *Star Wars* universe.

9. Yahn’s support proved crucial, as the *Stotannen* of Tuesday, 25 November 1980 announced the greatest news Talossa had seen since Independence: victory in what came to be called “the Battle of the Garage.” Conâ had, the night before, snuck over to Madison’s house and defaced the Royal father’s garage with black printer’s ink. He then made the idiotic move of bragging about this to Yahn—who informed the King, who informed his father who informed Conâ’s mother who informed Conâ who informed the King that he was surrendering. The King called Conâ’s vandalism a “typical act of religious irrationality,” and Conâ’s defeat “the final destruction of present-day anti-Talossanism.” Conâ formally surrendered (later signing a peace treaty with Talossa to that effect) and scrubbed all the ink off the garage during the first blizzard of winter.

10. The “Battle of the Garage” was the first foreign act which recognized the Kingdom of Talossa as an independent state. Talossa had fought, survived, and won its first war. This was a sobering moment: Talossa would have less time for make-believe. The King was said to be “visibly enthused,” but more importantly a growing audience among Ben’s friends was visibly entertained. Ben’s Talossa was beginning to take on the shape of something more than the proclamations of a single monarch: it was becoming a community. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Twenty-One (November 1980-July 1981) “Commitment and Lust”

“It is a piece of territory with a flag. That, in my mind, makes it a nation.”



1. As the dust cleared (or as the ink dried) life in Talossa returned to normal. Ambassador Yahn resigned in a dispute over the King's refusal to despise Blacks, with Yahn calling him “a leftist race-traitor.” *Stotannu* responded by calling Yahn “a crazed pseudo-Germanic fascist.”

2. Other news involved silly changes like unending new national anthems, new place names, or names for the newspaper, and the brief adoption of an official time zone. Perhaps the most interesting tidbit from this period was the “Talossan Land Reclamation Programme,” a pompous name for the laborious cleaning out of the King's messy room, but appropriately pompous as this did involve the Kingdom's entire national territory.

3. The ever-changing national language (it was Finnish by now) hardly represented anything genuinely Talossan. And so, on 11 December 1980, King Robert put an end to multilingual chaos in Talossa by decreeing that Talossa must have her own language and not any foreign language—even English—as official. It was a bold move, and for the next several months all the nation's newspapers would be written in “Talossan,” a jumbled Romance mish-mash of English, Portuguese, French, Romanian and Catalan, peppered with oddments like Swedish, German, Berber and Albanian. Eventually Ben standardized and codified his Talossan language, and it became a mighty symbol of Talossanity. Many terms in use by ordinary Talossans come from the unique Talossan language, such as *Cosâ*, *Cestoûr*, *Regipäts Talossán* (“RT”), *për*, and *contrâ*.

4. And on Friday, 26 December 1980, though nobody a year earlier would have believed it, Talossa celebrated its first anniversary of independence. The Kingdom of Talossa was here on the Earth to stay. Foreign nations had risen up against the King and been defeated; the Kingdom had allies, and a Talossan language and culture were on the road to becoming national treasures. The country's first birthday was ballyhooed in a special issue of *Stotannu* published that day on a huge sheet of freezer paper.

5. 1980 ended with a flurry of claims about World Singular Secession, as Madison tried to get **Dan Lorentz**, **Bob Murphy** and **Josh Macht**—three leftist friends—to form new nations. But his work came to naught; even the LOSS was breaking up over disputes between Madison and Yahn, and Talossa gave up on the whole World Singular Secessionist ideal. Instead, something much more interesting was happening: All these would-be nation builders found themselves unwittingly building Talossa, simply by being around and putting their two cents in as the King told all the diplomatic details of their arguments in the pages of *Stotannu*.

6. Dan Lorentz began writing a “column of foreign opinion” in *Stotannu* on 24 January 1981 advocating that Talossa be “invaded by leftists and destroyed.” Lorentz was certainly one such leftist; as late as 2005 he was still trying to “destroy Talossa.” His column was called “TZ,” from the last letters in his name. It continued for many years, touching on local politics and even Talossan poetry. “TZ” was a bright spot

in a paper full of atheist tirades and stories about abortive Talossan-language novels, the changing name of the King's official one-man political party, or Talossan money—all in an increasingly difficult Talossan language (picture).

7. Lorentz's interviews of the King that spring helped build Talossa as an interaction of people talking about Talossa. "Does Talossa really exist?" asked Lorentz of the King in one of these interviews. "Yes," Ben answered. "Talossa exists as a frame of mind, a reference point from which to launch wave after wave of Ben fanaticism. But it is more than a state of mind, it is a piece of territory with a flag. That, in my mind, makes it a nation." Lorentz then asked: "If I were to place a toothpick with a flag on it onto a bar of soap, would you consider it a nation?" Madison replied: "No, I wouldn't. Would you? I'd consider you a trifle odd." Talossa itself became a little less odd, perhaps, on the 6th of June when *Stotanneu* converted back permanently to the English language.

8. The King, who was now writing reams of boring essays about how religion was destroying humanity, went off to Alabama in June on vacation, and upon his return he formalized his friends' participation in Talossa by making them "honourary citizens" at a ceremony of knighthood at Josh Macht's house. Macht, Lorentz, Murphy, **Harry Wozniak**, and Josh's girlfriend **Dawn Scher** all became Talossans. Later, all marched to the beach where the King, overwhelmed as usual by the hugeness of the lake, mused and thought.

9. The ceremony left Ben in a bad mood. Handing out knighthoods was not what 'normal' boys did in Milwaukee, and he was worrying about the label of eccentricity Talossa helped pin on him. His friends understood the whimsical micronation, and even enjoyed playing along. But how to explain it to strangers? A trickier problem still: How to explain it to girls?

10. Such was the Royal preoccupation in July of 1981, which saw the King pursuing a variety of amorous flings and concluding that Talossa would have no part in the New Romantic Ben. The Royal mood in early July of 1981 saw *Stotanneu* (then temporarily named *Ben Wu*, in imitation of a Chinese magazine) announce that "The most important development in Talossa's history" would soon occur, the King saying that it involved "a great deal of sadness and apprehension on my part." On Sunday, 14 July 1981, huge, black letters in *Ben Wu* intoned, "IT IS OVER." The King announced "I am giving in to my own maturity," and declared that he would abdicate and that Talossa would dissolve itself.

11. In July of 1981 the ex-King decided to forsake Talossa's history—and its potential—in pursuit of a conventionalized 'maturity.' What would become of the Talossan dream and the tiny community that embraced it, now that its own creator and guru had abandoned it? ●●●

År Päts, Part Twenty-Two (July-September 1981) “Bloody Take-Over”

“We’ll have the elections when everybody can be here. Stop throwing things!”

1. *Renaissance! Return! Royalty!* screamed the headlines in the 22 July 1981 issue of *Ben Wu*, proclaiming the end of the Interregnum. A visiting French exchange student, **Frédéric Corïu**, had noticed the Talossan flag still fluttering in Ben’s room and expressed enthusiasm for the recently defunct Kingdom. “Destroying this 18 month old institution did not solve anything,” Madison admitted. “Indeed it left the King in a bored state of American citizenship.” Imbued with a new sense of pride, Ben vowed to build a new multi-ego society. He recrowned himself King on 4 August amid promises of a vague “Renaissance” that involved “a total replanning” of Talossan life, including free elections (after a fashion) in which all Talossans could participate.

2. The King, of course, announced he would contest the elections, under the banner of the **Royal Socialist Party**. To his left, an anti-Talossan opposition appeared, led by the erratic Dan Lorentz. He and Bob Murphy commandeered the King’s hand-written *Stotanneu* book, and scrawled a “Bloody Take Over” naming his aims: “UMM AH BOOM DOP DE DOP! If I am to run for Prime Minister, I must be guaranteed that I shall have unlimited power to mold Talossa as I wish. My wishes are divinely inspired, of course. I must have control over *Ben Wu*. I will serve America by attempting to return Talossa to America in part or in whole. Thank you very much.” Lorentz unveiled his new **Democratic Dandipratic Party**, its name taken from a worthless English coin.

3. “The forces of the ‘Democratic’ Dandipratic Party,” the King wrote, “have pooled their vile resources in order to accomplish the unthinkable: The destruction of a nation whose proud traditions extend back until December of 1979.” The DDP called for “subjecting Talossa to reality by eliminating it” and the “official renunciation of all Talossa’s past history as silly nothings issued from an inebriated brain.” The Talossan language was to be abolished, and “a new (or better yet a dead) Talossa” was the DDP’s official aim. According to the King, the DDP’s promise to “destroy Talossa” and return it to the USA was “like giving Poland back to Russia,” and was the product of Dan’s obedience to American and UN “imperialists,” “hegemonic forces,” and “corporate masters.”

4. The forces of “the senseless voices of American plastic conformity” and the “Fascist, screwed up and inept ‘king’ Ben” did battle for the next two months, vying for control of a majority in Talossa’s six-citizen electorate. “This is an experiment,” said King Robert in the 7 August *Ben Wu*. “Talossan democracy—that is, a democracy of many people, has never before existed. I hope it works.”

5. August 9th saw an “assassination attempt” against the King; his sister Jennifer had “poisoned” a pitcher of water in the refrigerator with baking soda, saying that it had something to do with a diet. “Baking soda passes by, but Madison lives on!” cried the paper in an esoteric allusion to Benito Mussolini, the King’s latest fave dictator.

6. The King issued a Mussoliniesque platform in English and Talossan, demanding that Talossan be “imposed” as the “one and only official tongue.” But then tilting suddenly leftwards, he declared Talossa a “Socialist Kingdom dedicated to the principles of Democratic Socialism,” because “The world’s only True Democracy must espouse ideals which are truly democratic.” In that spirit, elections were formally

set for 1 September 1981; but the date passed with no voting. The King declared: “Josh won’t be here on Saturday, so we’ll have the elections when everybody can be here. Stop throwing things!” *Ben Wu* reported the King’s praise of “Democracy as an institution, founded and unshakable, not a system for men to tamper with.” The paper then added, “Asked why he was tampering with it, His Majesty offered no comment.”

7. “The essential elements of the King’s character are flippancy and deceit,” warned DDP “party boss” Dan Lorentz as balloting finally began on 18 September. “These vile characteristics may render the Talossan experiment in elections meaningless. We hope they do not, but we shall see, when the final vote is cast.”

8. On 22 September, *Ben Wu* noted that a new Talossan word was adopted for “Kingdom,” namely, *Regipäts* (pronounced “REGGIE-pats”), derived obliquely from words meaning “king” and “country.” The “Kingdom of Talossa” was now officially **Regipäts Talossán**, a term found even in English documents ever since. Today, all Talossans call their country “**the RT.**” The RT’s national newspaper changed its name back from *Ben Wu* to *Stotanneu* the next day, and interviewed Dan Lorentz:

Q: *What, if anything, shall you do as PM?*

A: *We shall all see. I will endeavor to wrench Talossa into reality. America is not going to annex Talossa. I am a 17 year old socialist. I am not an American soldier or diplomat.*

Q: *Haven’t you committed yourself to the destruction of an independent, sovereign state?*

A: *There is no such thing. Talossa is not independent nor sovereign nor a state. Therefore, I can’t “return” Talossa to the USA. And as I have said, I work not for the USA. Ask me questions which might hint that you have some intelligence. If I ever said “I will serve America,” I was wrong. I didn’t mean to say that. How do you figure I’m a corporate imperialist? I’ve already explained what I am. You seem to be a dense skullhead. Cut the crap!*

9. Ben ended the debate calling Lorentz “an inconsistent and blubbering corporate imperialist baboon,” but on Sunday, 27 September 1981 the ballots were counted in the Kingdom of Talossa’s first democratic election. The DDP won 60% of the vote—Lorentz, Murphy and Macht—to 40% for Royal Socialism—Ben and Wozniak. Dan Lorentz was sworn in as Prime Minister at Riverside the next day, becoming the RT’s first elected leader. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Twenty-Three (September 1981-March 1982)
“Cheap Glory”

“Mussolini was hung and killed like a pig. Die Dead!”

1. Prime Minister Lorentz called for a new Dan-centric constitution and, when the King refused, called the King a “vile obstructionist” and a “dictator-like bastard.” Lorentz quickly lost patience with the King’s refusal to help him destroy Talossa, and ranted: “I want to destroy Talossa! The King is an undemocratic jerk. Depose him immediately!” But among Talossa’s other five citizens there was no sign of revolt. Instead, *Stotanneu* reported on 11 October that Lorentz was fired, “and will be tried by the Talossan Supreme Court on charges of High Treason stemming from his attempts to destroy Talossa by useless and meaningless Prime Ministerial Orders. Prime Minister Lorentz, upon hearing his dismissal, said ‘Ha, ha.’”

2. The King was souring on democracy in general and on 18 November replaced the Royal Socialist Party with a Fascist **Thundersword Movement**, describing it as “both Leftist and Fascist... Thundersword is what is right.” Along came green shirts and Duce salutes in a dramatic lurch to the right that received a big boost when Ben was defeated in an election for Senior Class President at Riverside by mobs of racist Blacks.

3. With Talossan democracy now dead, the King spent the rest of 1981 writing a huge, involved Talossan language grammar and dictionary as a term paper for **Florence Yarney**, his Creative Writing teacher. This 62-page tome gave Talossan a 17,000 word vocabulary made up largely of awful puns. Ben also made plans for the “glorious” celebration of Talossa’s second birthday. “I never expected anything this long, this glorious,” he swooned. He planned to publish a “multi-page anniversary issue of *Stotanneu* to “recount our glorious past and salute our glorious future.” But little came of this, and by December the country was clearly floundering in “glorious” stagnation.

4. Dan Lorentz, on the other hand, commandeered *Stotanneu* in December for another “Bloody Take Over.” He denounced the growing fascist leanings of “GVB,” i.e. Glorious, Victorious Ben: “Talossa hasn’t existed for several months. Prime Minister Lorentz officially abolished Talossa. By refusing to acknowledge this the pompous tiresome GVB has totally eschewed democracy. I want to remind all of Talossa that it doesn’t exist. And if it continues to deny facts, I wish it the absolute worst of luck. Ben you’re no longer a baby. Mussolini was hung and killed like a pig. Die Dead! Talossa has been DEAD for quite a while. GVB is a ludicrous farce. FASCISM is bankrupt of ideas and success. REPTILES are what Ben wants to sleep with. ‘PLEASE F*ck REPTILES.’ —Ben.”

5. On December 26th, Talossa celebrated its second anniversary of independence. The national flag was flown at the King’s house, later called Vuode Palace. It was reported that “Anti-Talossan US lackeys Dan Lorentz and Bob Murphy threw snowballs” at the flag. The paper also announced that the King’s sister was clearing out of a room adjacent to Talossa, and that Talossa could expect soon to realize “the ancient dream of a two-room *Grüilt Talossa* [Greater Talossa].”

6. In a fit of boredom harking back to the make-believe of late 1980, King Robert “deposed” himself on 9 January 1982 with a “Council for Nationalist Victory” (CNV) consisting of himself. This nonsense only lasted two weeks, but at least genuine Talossan news took its rightful place again in the national

press, which spent time issuing military edicts condemning ‘General’ Madison’s sister for periodically stealing his cat, Flyball, from his bedroom.

7. Of slightly more significance the “military government” continued to demand that Ben’s sister leave the adjacent room, now named “Enver Hoxha State,” which Talossa sought to annex. On 19 January, *Stotanneu* warned: “Jennifer has done absolutely nothing to ready the room for a triumphant Talossan entry. The formal date of annexation was a long time ago. The government is impatient.”

8. On 21 January 1982 King Robert resumed Royal command of Talossa after a “vote of confidence by the one-man CNV.” The King lifted “press censorship, martial law, and other freedom-stiflers.” From that moment on, Talossa had no more fake coups or revolutions, but its ‘fake’ nature as a bedroom country continued, and the press continued to rail against Jennifer’s occupation of “New Talossa,” the other room. “In order to further establish her claim,” *Stotanneu* noted on 14 March 1982, Jennifer “has moved heavy military equipment into the region, including a large set of weights.” The standoff forced the King to look outside his house for martial glory.

9. During all this inter-room diplomacy, the King had been reading about “Bophuthatswana,” one of South Africa’s Black “Bantustan” reservations, a so-called “independent state” consisting of specks of territory scattered across South Africa. This pseudo-country had a strange appeal for King Robert, and on 16 March 1982 he signed the “Talossan Territorial Cheap Glory Act,” which officially annexed his entire house, Downer Woods, and BA Beach. These three non-contiguous blocks of land were the RT’s first steps in establishing territorial permanence on the North American continent: Talossa could now boast of grass, trees and sand. Ben’s house became the capital: Vuode Province. BA Beach was named Kemâl Atatürk State; Downer Woods (the “Enver Hoxha Rabbit Reserve”) became Enver Hoxha State. “*Talossa has as much right as the university to claim these uninhabited lands,*” the King declared in *Stotanneu*. The law itself was typed in *Talossa: A Handbook*, a typed, self-bound hardcover book that Ben was writing that spring. Curiously, the book was later mailed to Frédéric Coriü as a gift and forgotten about for almost twenty years.

10. These annexations were made east of the Milwaukee River, on land once owned by the Potawatomi Indians and never legally incorporated by treaty into the United States. No protest from the Potawatomi, or the United States, was ever received. And as Ben Madison points out, the secession of the Confederacy after 1860 was met with force of arms, while the secession and expansion of Talossa have been ignored. “So obviously they have no complaints.” ●●●

Är Päts, Part Twenty-Four (March-December 1982) “International Relations”

“A pompous bulwark against stupidity everywhere.”

1. While Talossa was annexing little bits of Milwaukee in the spring of 1982, Argentina annexed the British Falkland Islands on 2 April. Talossa immediately sided with Britain and declared war on Argentina. This “belligerent blood bubbling” provoked sneers from Dan Lorentz in the press, calling Talossa a “dream farce”; but Talossa rejoiced (“Argie Heads Roll!”) in the British victory.
2. The “dream farce” was alive and well as the King printed up Talossan currency, at the rate of 59 “Ben” to the US dollar. The number “59” had assumed mythic significance after Lorentz announced he’d had a dream prophesying the death of Ben at age 59; this became a running joke and later a hallmark of RT culture. But Lorentz was also calling for an “administerer of reality” to “advise Ben” to call new and fair elections. While the King at first resisted, he did realize Talossa was more than just his proclamations. His “loyal subjects” needed to have their say too.
3. On March 9th, the King wrote an editorial about how the US should gloriously annex Antarctica. Knowing they wouldn’t, he announced that Talossa was laying formal claim to a slice of Antarctica between 90° and 150° West, never before claimed by any other nation. Talossa formally christened the new territory *Pengöpäts* (Penguin Country) and also declared the annexation of seven tiny Pacific islands, already claimed by the US, Britain or Kiribati.
4. International recognition was received on 20 April 1982 when **Antonio R. Riley**, whom Talossa recognized as the US Ambassador, met with King Robert at Riverside to sign a “Treaty of Milwaukee” formally ceding lands to Talossa and recognizing Talossa’s independence. While Dan Lorentz and Bob Murphy pleaded with Riley not to sign the treaty, Riley declared: “The United States wants to establish good relations with all nations of the world, no matter how small.” The treaty ceded Lake Park, the UWM campus, and Riverside High School to Talossa. Lorentz denounced the treaty as “ludicrous spasms of childishness,” while Riley was eventually catapulted into the Wisconsin state legislature and then the cabinet.
5. But the King, seeking even greater glory, soon violated the treaty and annexed even more land from Milwaukee, including Mitchell Field—the city’s airport. *Stotannen* lauded the annexation of “great gobs of glorious terra firma” but Ambassador Riley pronounced the Treaty “null and void” [sic] while Talossa proceeded to make other annexations in the area.
6. While Dan and Bob complained about the annexations, the King gave into their demands for elections. He announced that a “Parliamentary Congress of National Assemblies” would be created, in which only a minority of members would be elected; the rest were to be appointed by the King. Lorentz’ DDP and Murphy’s **Order Party** announced they would contest the race, but both of them failed to vote. The King’s **National Fascist Party** technically won the race but in the face of leftist apathy the “Assembly” was never convened, even though a building had been picked out for it to meet in on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) campus, recognized since June 6th as Montevûdio, the RT’s first capital outside Ben’s bedroom.

7. Murphy, Lorentz and Madison (picture) all graduated from high school in June of 1982. The first two headed off to Ohio for college, while Ben went to UWM to major in Russian and International Relations. Ben's proclamation of a neo-pagan Kwakiutl Indian religion as the "official state religion" of Talossa that summer took up an inordinate amount of space in *Stotanneu*, as did his bewildering and unexpected conversion to a small sect of Mormonism.

8. Fortunately, Talossan affairs continued as well. During a trip to France to visit Frédéric Corïu, the King annexed Cézembre, a small island off of Brittany, on 17 August; it is now a Talossan province. Corïu, for his part, created "Fira," his own secessionist nation, in the Paris suburbs. Over the next few months Talossa and Fira signed various treaties and made and abandoned a number of make-believe Third World "colonial claims."

9. Talossa was also patching things up with another secessionist state: the King met with Gary Conâ to discuss signing a "peace treaty" to formally end the Conâ Wars. *Stotanneu* described the "glorious" events of the war against Conâ as "an amusing chapter in Talossan history. If any single event justifies the existence of Talossa as a pompous bulwark against stupidity everywhere, then that event is the 'Conâ Wars.'" Conâ's country still existed, under the name of the "Confederation of One," and on 30 November it signed a treaty with Talossa recognizing Conâ's Glib Room as the "defeated nation" which had paid "reparations" to Talossa.

10. Talossa's frenzied annexations, which stretched from Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, to Gulfport, Mississippi, were so poorly recorded that they even baffled the King. In late November 1982 Talossa began a phase of territorial consolidation which ended on 26 January 1983 with the proclamation of Talossa's current borders: "Edgewood and the River." These borders placed Talossa squarely on the East Side of the Milwaukee River in its present size and location with easily defined borders, leaving the country sort of "rectal" in shape (see map, Part 43).

11. The RT celebrated its third birthday as an independent nation on 26 December 1982. Milwaukee, said *Stotanneu*, was "festooned with the red and green" Talossan colours (which might 'perhaps' be interpreted as the colours of Christmas). In what soon became an annual event—a Speech from the Throne on the anniversary of Independence—the King promised:

"Three years. That's a long time. I put all my hopes, dreams, aspirations and better qualities into this Norwegian sausage machine, and look what came out. Fabulous. I shall try to make the next year in Talossa as glorious as possible, and shall try to avoid make-believe coups and revolutions, unlike the beginning of 1982." ●●●

Är Päts, Part Twenty-Five (December 1982-May 1984)
“Musical Prime Ministers”

“...pick either the general or the blimp, both are equally illustrious.”

1. In December 1982 the King prepared a “List of Government Jobs” to be filled with Talossa’s citizens. This, he hoped, would solve the “problem” of getting non-Ben citizens active in Talossa without them voting him out as King. In January 1983 he named the first non-Ben Talossan government since 1981’s DDP débâcle. Dan Lorentz became Prime Minister (PM) and Bob Murphy became Foreign Minister (FM). Both participated by mail from Antioch College in Ohio, where they were students. When the King suggested Moral Majorityite Yahn as War Minister, Murphy fired off a letter on 5 February urging Ben to “turn a deaf ear to all petitions” to make Yahn a citizen. Otherwise, Murphy warned he would resign as FM and “renounce his Honorary Citizenship and all supposed affiliations with your Royal Numbskull’s fantasy, the Kingdom of Talossa.” Dan added: “Talossa needs a psychiatrist, not a prime minister.” From 1983 to 1991 this trichotomy of leftist Lorentz, centrist Madison, and right-wing Yahn dominated RT politics.

2. The King formally appointed Yahn as War Minister on 16 February 1983, but Murphy and Lorentz refused to have anything to do with him. The next few months were dominated by Lorentz and Yahn trading places as Prime Minister at the King’s behest while he tried in vain to get them all in the same government together. The hysterical Leftists thwarted every attempt, but Madison’s too-frequent bowing to their demands prompted a hail of invective from Yahn, who denounced the Left as “slime-sucking pigs, socialist swines and pig-headed homosexuals.”

3. Almost as if to provoke the King’s totalitarian fevers, on May 1st, the Talossan flag flying at his house was stolen! He declared May Day to be “A perpetual Holiday of Hatred” and claimed that “the fundamental struggle at work in the human sphere of existence is the struggle between Good and Evil.” He praised “totalitarianism” as the only way to oppose “criminal zombies who have sought to destroy all social cohesion from the dawn of humanity. Only when corpses hang from the façade of City Hall will people realize that their rights, granted them by the almighty State, are protected. No freedom for the criminal or the potential criminal! All power to the State!” A new flag was soon purchased from Eder Flag, a local flag factory.

4. Yahn had also founded his own “pro-totalitarian organization” on the fringes of the RT, a **Nationalist Party of America** which sent reams of letters and Hitlerian artwork to the King. Madison, who called himself “a fascist, not a Nazi,” kept it at arm’s length and spent his own artistic efforts on writing and drawing a 12 page *Atlas of Talossan History* that ballyhooed “the heroic Madison family” and claiming that the country’s climate makes Talossa “one of the finest places in the world to live, and giving rise to a pride which can only manifest itself in a diligent Royal family, with literary and educational excellence, and capable of greatness and long sentences.”

5. On 4 May 1983, King Robert again appointed Dan Lorentz Prime Minister, with Murphy Foreign Minister. John Yahn was not in the new Government. Murphy formed a **Talossan Glory Against Yahn and Other Pedantic Parties Party** and demanded new elections, denouncing Yahn as “a military and historical charlatan who’ll bestow favors on anyone foolish enough to support his wild fantasies and inflate his Hindenburg-sized ego (pick either the general or the blimp, both are equally illustrious).”

6. The Lorentz régime demanded Yahn's expulsion from the RT and return of all lands outside the King's bedroom to the USA. King Robert refused (despite Dan's threat that refusal would result in Ben's "immediate lifetime imprisonment in the realm of the fantastic"), but surprisingly he gave in to Lorentz' call for new elections on 28 June. Not surprisingly, the Leftists went on to boycott the election they themselves had demanded. Yahn was appointed PM on 7 July but the King pleaded with Bob Murphy to take his place as PM. When Murphy refused—and quit as Foreign Minister—the King gave up. Yahn's embarrassing swastika-filled letters and the Leftists' buffoonery had beaten Ben's multi-ego hopes for Talossa, for the time being. Murphy warned that any more toleration for Yahn would lead to his own departure from the RT. So the King asked for Yahn's resignation, Yahn denounced the "exalted and prominent leftist scum" that had supposedly taken control of the RT, and that was the end of democracy in Talossa for another two years.

7. The King (picture; he grew his famous beard in 1983) left for a semester in London that helped RT politics cool down. Here on 14 November he founded **CÚG**, an organization to guide the Talossan language. Yahn and the King made up, jointly hailing President Reagan's invasion of Grenada that fall, but Ben spent most of his time celebrating the 3rd anniversary of the Battle of the Garage as "a great festival of civilization" and of "the natural purity of our will." He returned to Talossa on 17 December and spent months in post-European gloom denouncing US politics and even running for President on the "I Hate America Party" ticket! His Throne Speech on the RT's 4th birthday (26 December 1983) was an anti-American tirade: *"This country [is] slipping into quasi-tribal primitivity... Violence is our national religion, and ignorance our national philosophy."*

8. His anti-US rants briefly achieved the status of art on 22 May 1984 when he concluded that Talossa, as a "nation of immigrants," was "fake" and needed to be more "European" and ancient. So he announced that Talossans were somehow "descended from" Celtic warriors from Toulouse, France (get it?) who sailed across the ocean to build Indian mounds in Lake Park. Later his Celts became North African Berbers—who were both unconventional and cool, in a way that Celts, who were too conventionally cool, weren't—and official snickering over Talossa's "Berber heritage" never went away. In 1994 Talossa adopted a law proclaiming itself "inextricably and inexplicably connected somehow to Berbers," and in 1996 Madison published his vast scholarly work "proving" the Berber-Talossan connexion, *The Berber Project* – the roots of the first half of this book.

9. The important news in Talossa in 1984 can be retold on a post card. Was Talossa slowing down, losing steam, even dying? To escape the doldrums of anti-US ramblings, the whole nation—not just the King—would have to rise as one. And it happened. ●●●

"I want to know whether I should be magnanimous or furious."



5. *TNN* appeared just in time to report on the country's first successful democratic election. Dan's DDP won 16.7% of the vote, the Communists 8.3%. Yahn's Nationalist Party got 16.7%, and the King's Progressive Conservative "Tories" (as they were soon nicknamed) got a whopping 63.3% of the vote. Nine people had voted. The King was elated, and Yahn was named to head a "national unity" government which included everyone except Dan's destructionist DDP. The government soon adopted

With a burgeoning population, interested citizens, and

a 66-article “Organic Law” which served as a sort of constitution. While the much-derided “OrgLaw” gave the King a veto over every aspect of government, it set out election procedures and the workings of the Cosâ, and was a good base on which to build a viable democracy, as proven by the fact it lasted three years.

6. Unfortunately, relations between the King and Yahn’s government deteriorated quickly. The King’s newly-published *History of Talossa* played up the Berbers, and the Americans’ wholesale slaughter of Talossa’s Indians. Yahn blasted the book in *TNN*, calling its author “snotty and obnoxious.” Yahn went on to praise Joe McCarthy and launched into tiresome Moral Majority tirades on “moral issues” like heavy metal music. The King and Lorentz met for a “summit” at Antioch College in Ohio. Dan urged the King to fire Yahn, but the King refused. Dan’s college buddy **Brook Pânetâ**, a right-wing aristocratic Germanophile Gay ex-Marine hypochondriac nudist, became a Talossan citizen during the summit and allied himself at once with moral crusader Yahn. Ben, whose own political views were moderating at breakneck speed, was growing disillusioned with Yahn; the King was now old enough to vote in US elections, and had just cast his very first vote for reformist Democrat Gary Hart.

7. When the King returned to the RT, he had to face Yahn’s new “autobiography” which spoke of the “inherent inferiority” of Blacks and Hispanics. The King hinted that he wanted Yahn to resign, and Yahn did just that, on 6 June 1985. The King immediately appointed pliant do-nothing Florence Yarney as Prime Minister, to fill out Yahn’s term as a reliable Tory stooge.

8. The King, on holiday in Canada, drew up a PC platform endorsing fair elections (no more counting non-votes for the PC) and on 22 July he dissolved the Cosâ and called elections. Yahn, busy in his own “Pórt Maxhestic Province” within Talossa, hailed the decision. Frédéric Corïu created a **Front Uni pour la Nation** (FUN). New citizen **Wes Enrici**, a moderate-right wargamer, ran a **Black Hand** party (Talossan: MN) which called for annexing two nearby suburbs, Whitefish Bay and Shorewood, home of Napoleon’s, a wargame store frequented by Talossans. Williams and Yarney, prodded by the King, set up a **Liberal Party** (PL) to lure moderate leftists away from the DDP. Yahn, head of the renamed **Talossan National Party** (TNP), drifted off into the political weeds after demanding the “annihilation” of his rivals. Madison blasted his Reaganite chest-beating while Yahn condemned Ben’s naïve complaints about US politics, society, bullies, and Republicans.

9. Fifteen voters cast ballots 15 October 1985, electing a deeply divided Cosâ. The PC only won 40% of the vote. The DDP and Liberals tied at 13.3% each, the TNP had 20% and the Black Hand and FUN, 6.7% each. The King got everyone but the DDP and TNP into a grand coalition of the centre, and named Frédéric Corïu—who lived in France—PM. Despite the divided Cosâ it appeared the King was again in total control, surrounded by fawning centrist parties. ●●●

År Päts, Part Twenty-Seven (October 1985-October 1986) “Civil War, Paper War”

“...the smaller, more idiosyncratic, more honest, crankier Talossa...”

1. Madison still saw Talossa in “anti-American” terms, writing in his Throne Speech on Talossa’s sixth birthday (26 December 1985) that “America was great once, because it stood as a gigantic protest against the rest of the world. Today, America *is* the rest of the world, and the world longs for a new protest nation. What does this mean in practical terms? Well, perhaps Talossa is just a waste of time, a farce, and a great big joke. And if so, *wonderful!* That is what this ‘mature’ world needs! Not a slap in the face, or a shot in the arm, but a good joke. And if our joking makes us happy and infuriates the world, so much the better.”

2. Meanwhile, Vuode Province held elections and on 1 January 1986, Dan Lorentz became Premier. He abolished Vuode’s constitution, warned he might secede from Talossa, and told the King to “watch out.” He then banned Yahn’s TNP in Vuode, unless it renamed itself the “Homosexual Communist League”! After more such antics the King deposed Lorentz, but Lorentz announced that he was seceding nearby Maritiimi Territory from the RT; the King fired him—at which point Dan declared himself the legitimate government of Talossa.

3. On 6 March Lorentz presented an ultimatum allegedly signed by five citizens, demanding the King abolish the Cosâ, become a dictator, and return all land except Ben’s bedroom to the USA. The King refused, and pronounced the signatures on the document to be forgeries! Lorentz proclaimed himself “Divine and Eternally Patient Provisional Dictator” on 3 April 1986, and set up a “provisional government” in the hills of Vuode Province. Both protagonists soon agreed to defuse the situation, and to hold early elections so voters could pick their preference. The election began on 10 March with Dan arguing a Ben dictatorship would be “a return of the smaller, more idiosyncratic, more honest, crankier Talossa” that he preferred. But his ‘cranky’ ideas proved ridiculous to voters, and Lorentz recreated his “guerilla movement” before the polls even closed. The DDP got 14.1% of the vote compared to 25.1% for the PC. Corîu put together a PC-Black Hand-FUN coalition which controlled only 53.8% of the seats; Yahn’s TNP floundered at DDP levels. Referenda showed no support for Dan’s schemes; he eventually quit rebelling and vowed to play by the rules, for the time being.

4. Just as Lorentz was apparently moderating, the TNP was moving right, adopting the nickname *Stahlhelm* (“Steel Helmet”) from an anti-Semitic racist German political party of the 1920’s that teamed up with the Nazis. *Stotannen* gleefully printed embarrassing articles about the original Stahlhelm which Yahn clumsily denied.

5. In May the King headed for a long state visit to Europe, where he toured Cézembre, the RT’s island colony off Brittany, with PM Frédéric Corîu. He returned to Talossa on 11 July where *TNN* was ranting about “dark immigrants,” claiming Yahn was only a moderate conservative, and calling Ben the real crypto-Nazi. Yahn blamed his own Nazi reputation on the King “duping” people, and trumpeted the fact that far more Talossans read *TNN* than the hand-written, inaccessible *Stotannen*. While Ben was printing the world’s first typed *English-Talossan Dictionary*, Yahn attacked the Talossan language, urging that it be abolished in favour of German, since some Talossans were part-German and German ought to be the RT’s “racial” language. (Madison suggested Proto-Indo-European would be more inclusive,

and just as irrelevant.) Finally, Yahn denounced Madison's bombastic, patriotic, Berber-inspired RT cultural separatism as "Unamerican."

6. Yahn's bitter attacks prompted the King to copy *TNN*'s format and on 2 August 1986 *Stotanneu* was launched as a mass-market, photocopied newspaper. It soon surpassed *TNN* in readership, which provoked more bitterness from Yahn as the papers started a mud-slinging "Paper War." Yahn denounced any 'patriotic' attachment to Talossa as evil, and claimed the PC was somehow plotting to "force" Talossans to learn the Talossan language in order to cut them off from their "German racial heritage." Since Yahn's American nationalism was scarcely-disguised German racial bombast, the King denounced Yahn's race fixation. He put up a laundry list of social decay in the US (crime, divorce, etc.) to blast Yahn's claim that America was the best country in the world. Yahn warned that Talossa was slipping into "real subversion" and might become a security risk for the US. The King backpedaled and contrasted America's historic ideals with Yahn's nonexistent "America" where everyone listened to classical music and took pride in German heritage—an "America" that Ben called no less an imaginary country than Talossa. Even Yahn's TNP deputy, Brook Pànetâ, applauded Ben's article; but Yahn condemned it and changed his province from a Talossan name to a German one ("*Südlicher Großhafen*") to underscore his "racial heritage" (though he had to ask Ben to translate the name into German!).

7. Ben's article was a sign that his politics were moderating. Coming to embrace the diversity and democracy that made America good, Ben was slowly but surely moving into his father's US Democratic Party camp. Still, Ben and Yahn bickered for the rest of the year. On 24 September, the "Love Rock," an island in Talossan waters off our east coast in the Talossan Sea, was destroyed by an American "attack" since it had been judged a "hazard to navigation." Ben's *Stotanneu* denounced the move as "state-sponsored terrorism," while Yahn's *TNN* angrily supported the US destruction of sovereign Talossan territory.

8. On 15 October 1986, elections were held, marked by a complete turn-around on the part of Dan Lorentz. Having just called for a Ben dictatorship, he was now calling for Ben to be deposed as King by a democratic republic! Stunningly, PM Coriu endorsed this call—so the King fired him and named Wes Enrici (MN) the new Prime Minister. Now under siege from Left and Right, the King's PC got a huge sympathy wave and won 53.3% of the 15 votes cast. The DDP-FUN republican bloc got only 20%, as did the TNP. The Tories were jubilant; their plans for a constitutional monarchy under majority rule had struck the right chord. The DDP and TNP seemed to have hurled themselves into the trash can of history. For the moment. ●●●

Är Päts, Part Twenty-Eight (October 1986-March 1987)
“Dobberpuhl”

“Robert II will be a true symbol of our national future.”

1. As soon as the polls closed in October 1986, Dan Lorentz was complaining about the results while Yahn and Pănetă were threatening to quit over Talossa’s “subversive” nature. The TNP even sent campaign literature to voters (the next election was six months away) warning them that PC rule meant “a one party state and the King has been given autocracy!” To give the King more headaches, the DDP and FUN formally united and became PUNK: **People United for No King**.

2. The PC and PUNK ploughed ahead on reforming the Organic Law. Lorentz suggested a “Vote by Post” system by which Cosâ legislation could be voted on by mail. The PC warmly endorsed the plan, which opened participation to multiple “Members of the Cosâ” rather than just party bigwigs. The vestigial Senäts (upper house) was abolished.

3. On the Right, however, the *Stotannen-TNN* “Paper Wars” continued with each side calling the other “Nazi” and “Fascist,” and Yahn blasting Ben’s Talossan patriotism as anti-American, “unpatriotic subversion.” Yahn denounced *Stotannen* as a Talossan *Pravda*, and on 9 November cancelled his subscription to the “sickening” *Stotannen*: “We shall NOT be shut down by the obfuscating ‘party line’ of PC-owned *Stotannen*! Don’t be duped by the King!”

4. The King visited Lorentz in Madison, Wisconsin, for another legal reform summit. The issue of the Monarchy was much in the air. Ben had just designed a gorgeous coat of arms for Talossa (picture) topped with a crown, confirming that Talossa would indeed be headed by a King. But Lorentz asked Ben to step down as King because it was unfair for one citizen to have so much power. Ben refused to support a “republic,” which seemed boring or not quite fairy-tale enough for Talossa. Ben proposed making someone else—like his father, or Queen Elizabeth—a purely figurehead Sovereign. PUNK demanded a full-fledged republic, arguing that Ben had served a legitimate unifying rôle as King and no other person could wear that symbolic mantle.

5. Meanwhile, John Yahn’s in-your-face approach to RT politics provoked angry replies from various citizens in *Stotannen* including one from John Eiffler lampooning Yahn as a paranoid Nazi masturbator. Under that kind of pressure, on 17 November Yahn quit his RT citizenship out of “disgust, disgrace and disillusionment,” blasting all Talossans as “a bunch of leftist scum.” But his departure received almost no attention, crowded out by the all-engrossing Monarchy issue.

6. On 20 November the PC and PUNK agreed to hold a referendum on the Monarchy in January, but on 5 December the subject took an abrupt and surprising turn. **Robert Dobberpuhl**, a teaching assistant to Talossan UWM professor **William Renzi**, expressed interest in Talossa. Dobberpuhl chatted with King Robert on the topic of his own noble Pomeranian origins. The enthralled King got the Cosâ to put an option on the upcoming referendum which could make Robert Dobberpuhl King of Talossa—as King Robert II.

7. The PC and MN lined up for Dobberpuhl. PUNK opposed any King, especially an ‘outsider.’ Liberals begged Ben to retain the “Ben-Ego Kingdom.” But “Talossa needs its Monarchy,” Ben wrote. “Without

it, we sink into pseudo-modernistic trendiness. There is only one solution. We have a man who will be King. Robert II will be a true symbol of our national future.”

8. The rhetoric escalated. Lorentz denounced Dobberpuhl as a “Neo-Nazi” without the slightest shred of evidence. But the January, 1987 referendum ended with a narrow majority (53.8%) in favour of Dobberpuhl taking over as King Robert II. By the same margin, the people endorsed Wes Enrici’s plan to annex Shorewood and Whitefish Bay, but the King failed to find film for his camera to obtain photographic proof of the annexations, so they were never carried out (a fact that would rankle Enrici for years).

9. On 11 February 1987, King Robert I visited Dobberpuhl and asked if he wanted to be King with only 54% of the vote. He said yes, and so, both men signed a document formally stripping the Monarchy of its political power and abolishing the 1979 Constitution. Ben then abdicated in favour of Dobberpuhl, who became King Robert II of the RT. Dan Lorentz attacked the new King: “In order for a King to be a meaningful symbol with justified authority for the nation, he must be from the soil of the nation, and he must be integral to its integrity and functioning.” Dobberpuhl, because he was not a long-standing citizen “from the soil of the nation” (the “Soilitariat,” as Ben lampooned the country’s élitist old-guard) was a mere “opportunistic bug”; and, as Dan advised his readers, “It’s okay to swat this fly.”

10. PM Enrici called new elections in February, to last a month. The Liberals, in disarray and lacking a programme, failed to run. Only the PC, MN and PUNK turned out. The PC blasted PUNK for its clannish bigotry; PUNK ran solely to “dump Dobberpuhl the Dummy King.” The one person with nothing to say on the question (yet) was a now chastened and more tolerant John Yahn, who applied to have his citizenship restored once the election was over.

11. In the midst of all this, the virtually unknown King Robert II gave his first Speech from the Throne. The new King leaped blandly into his rôle of Entertainer to the Nation by calling for a paper airplane air force and proclaimed himself “the Friend of Small, Furry Mammals.” Nobody was entertained.

12. A huge voter turnout (17 voters) on 25 March saw unprecedented results: The PC got only 35.3% of the vote, to a stunning 58.8% for PUNK. And this time there was no almighty King Ben to quash the results. Dan Lorentz was sworn in as Prime Minister, in full control of Talossa’s destiny. “A change of power from Ben to a non-Ben has finally happened,” Lorentz declared in his first speech to the nation as PM. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Twenty-Nine (March 1987-February 1988)
“One King After Another”

“The king of swat, the king of rock and roll, and the king of Talossa.”

1. On 29 March 1987 Lorentz’ government “legislatively decapitated” King Robert II, ending his 47-day reign and kicking off the “Provisional Peculiar Republic of Talossa.” Lorentz noted that “PUNK realizes that it was elected on an anti-Dobberpuhl-as-King platform, not an anti-Monarchy one,” and promised a referendum at the end of his six-month term to decide the fate of the Throne.
2. Meanwhile, John Yahn returned to Talossa and teamed up with fellow conservatives **Andrew Wozniak**, Wes Enrici, and Ben Madison to form a **Rally for the Kingdom** (RPR) to restore King Dobberpuhl. The RPR was based in Ben’s Vuode Province, so Lorentz sicced Ben’s arch-enemy Bob Murphy on him as Vuode’s “Governor General” to scrutinize Ben’s every move. They banned all royalist symbols and the word “King” from the papers; Vuode threatened to secede from Talossa.
3. But on 10 April, Dobberpuhl himself suddenly quit Talossa in a bizarre, paranoid, angry letter claiming his defeat was all a brilliant plot hatched by Ben Madison to cure “liberal apathy” by getting Lorentz’s followers to rally against him! This plunged the cause of monarchism in Talossa into a shambles until May, when Riverside English teacher Florence Yarney put herself up as candidate for “King” with Madison’s blessing. The Tories wanted a non-Ben King and Yarney, a widely-beloved figure and former PM, fit the bill perfectly. “King Florence!” became the Tories’ rallying cry. Talossans were able to vote on the issue earlier than expected when PM Lorentz suddenly dissolved the Cosâ on 29 July.
4. Ever the contrarian, Dan declared that Ben should come back and be King again. Arguing the RT “must orbit the big-Ben-ego,” Dan formed a **King Ben Party** to challenge the PC. But Yarney was popular and only the PC really campaigned: on 15 August the Tories won a landslide 62.5% of the 16 votes cast. Even Dan voted PC; his King Ben Party got no votes. Yahn’s TNP got 12.5% of the vote and a host of minor parties shared the remainder. Talossa’s newest citizen, **Sandee Prachel**, was chosen to be the next Tory Prime Minister.
5. And on 24 August 1987, King Florence I was crowned at a ceremony in Lake Park (picture). Calling herself “the king of swat, the king of rock and roll and the King of Talossa,” she vowed not to banish her sister to Scotland.
6. Sandee Prachel emerged as an activist, anti-apathy PM. On 3 September she vowed in her first Speech to the Nation to “encourage each Talossan to know more about Talossa, to wish to know more about Talossa, and to wish to wish to know more about Talossa. I pledge to do all I can to make Talossa prosper.” She bought copies of Talossa’s *History*, and of Madison’s new *English-Talossan Dictionary*, to model her enthusiasm.
7. Even more important was the appearance that month of the first “Clark,” the monthly journal of the Cosâ which sends copies of all bills to the various MCs (Members of the Cosâ) for their votes in the “Vote By Post” system, which prevailed in RT government until 1996, when the government went onto the internet. This first Clark contained 14 bills, and showcased the talents of Secretary of State John

Yahn, who published the Clark (named for “Clark Graphics,” a copy shop in Talossa where the first Clarks were photocopied). The system was quickly mired in controversy: MCs refused to pay fees to Yahn for bills they submitted, so Yahn refused to count their votes.

8. MCs, infatuated with their own new-found power, tended to ignore party discipline. Madison’s own PC delegates revolted against him to support Leftist legislation. A major showdown came when the Left (and many Tories) defeated Ben’s proposal that all future citizens buy his newly-published, 200-page *History of Talossa* so they would know something about the Talossa they were joining. Ben even threatened to bolt from the PC.

9. While Talossans were vituperating over that and other issues, King Florence announced that she was bored with being King and (like most everyone else) wanted Ben to be King again. When Ben formally withdrew his support from the left-leaning Prachel, who barely survived the November 1987 Vote of Confidence, politicians like Lorentz demanded new elections. Dan fielded a cynical **Bob Fights Ticket** (BFT) so Robert I could be King while Bob Murphy was made PM, just so the country could see the cat-fighting between those two long-time rivals.

10. And so, tired of all the whining, PM Prachel dissolved the Cosâ on 29 December and called new elections. Madison announced that John Eiffler was the PC’s next choice for PM, and vowed to oppose restoration of the Ben-Ego monarchy. The PC and Black Hand ran as a **United Party** (UP) in the election, as Madison again half-heartedly endorsed MN leader Enrici’s call for annexation of Shorewood. The BFT, UP, TNP, FUN, and Liberals were joined by Andrew Wozniak’s rabid **Conservatives Against Liberal Laziness** or CALL. **Schneider’s Talossan Marxist Party** (STOMP) was led by **Jack Schneider**, a Communist who endorsed the Islamic jihad against novelist Salman Rushdie. It was an odd election with no important issues, and ended with the electorate in utter confusion. The UP won only 32% of the vote, its worst ever. Its rival BFT got 26% and the other four parties ended up at around 11% each. Observers expected a UP-TNP coalition, but the two parties did not have a majority. Rather than rely on Wozniak’s CALL, the UP turned to the BFT and a ridiculous centre-left “grand coalition” took shape.

11. The only issue was of course the Monarchy. Madison was refusing to budge, but when Wes Enrici—his last ally—deserted him, he finally gave in. On 2 February 1988, Robert Ben Madison announced he would accept the Talossan Throne again. ●●●

År Päts, Part Thirty (February-December 1988) “Bob Fights”

“An election might clarify things. Bring it on.”



1. The bizarre Ben-Bob coalition took office on 7 February 1988 when Bob Murphy, “surprised as hell to be made PM,” was sworn in. He kicked off his term by refusing to give Tories their traditional cabinet portfolios, and called for Talossa to give most of its land to the USA; at each cry of criticism from the UP, Lorentz taunted and dared Madison to quit the 3-hour-old coalition. As *Stotannen* pointed out, it was hard to blame Ben for the “squawking,” as it was a BFT campaign promise.

2. Feelings were kinder when 15 Talossans gathered at Dan’s house on Saturday, 27 February, for the official re-coronation of His Majesty King Robert I. Murphy (pic, on left) and King Florence made speeches, and then Florence officially recrowned Robert I. The newly-restored King had few powers, but vowed to be “a do-things King,” not a “mouthpiece for the PM.” Videotape of the events is stored in the National Archives. After a year that had seen three different kings and one PM as head of state, few would have predicted that King Robert I was going to remain King of Talossa for the next 17 years.

3. The PM had somehow acquired the right to veto bills, and Murphy used this power with relish to block the will of the Cosâ, while Dan passed legislation chastising the King for *his* veto, a veto which he had never used. In an effort to save the coalition, the King and Murphy signed a “Compact” on 10 April: each agreed not to veto the other’s bills. But on 3 May, the PM tore up the “Compact” by vetoing a trivial bill making Ben governor of Cézembre, the RT’s tiny island colony near France. When Ben protested, Murphy condemned “bitter, bitter Ben” and his “hysterics,” and proceeded to announce that both Lorentz and Murphy would boycott the next Talossan election. *Stotannen* summed up their antics:

“Their overall strategy is this: Push Ben back into as prominent a position as he can be (King) and then portray him as a power-hungry, closed-minded, right-wing, sniveling petty hysteric who is leading Talossa to stagnant doom. This populist, ‘send him a message’ type strategy presupposes the existence of a vast, untapped well of anti-Ben discontent out there in Talossa. Does it exist? We think not, but an election might clarify things. Bring it on.”

4. While Murphy blasted Ben’s “tiresome shrillness” over Murphy’s broken promises, the United Party voted on 11 May to quit the coalition and changed its name back to the **Progressive Conservative Party**. Much to its amazement, the PC found itself out in the cold when Murphy rallied the minor parties in the Cosâ to form a huge coalition to shut the PC out of power. The coalition had no agenda and Murphy admitted it only existed to piss off the PC; it proposed not a single bill.

5. Despite (or maybe to have more of) all the infighting and bickering, Talossans sat down on 24 July to write a “1988 *Constituziun*” to replace the undemocratic Organic Law. Madison, Murphy, Lorentz, Yahn and Andrew Wozniak argued for five hours at a Constitutional Convention. The Monarchy became hereditary and the King got a real veto (needing a Cosâ vote to override it) while the PM’s veto was replaced by a right to issue “Prime Dictates” (PDs): executive orders with the force of law. Lorentz provided eight aptly named “Vague Principles” against which all RT laws would be judged. Madison

urged strong referendum rules, but the élitist Left blocked efforts to allow the people to make laws by referendum.

6. Voters approved the new *Constituziun* and elected a new government but no left-wing party had registered for the ballot. So when the polls closed on 14 September, the PC trounced the TNP by winning an utterly unprecedented 79% of the vote. Only 14 voters voted; many leftists abstained.

7. Murphy ended his government with a blast of hot air, taking credit for bills the King had written and defending apathy. But his last blow came when Lorentz announced that voters who had refused to vote (since no leftist party was on the ballot) should be “represented” in the new Cosâ by empty seats. The Uppermost Cort laughed this argument off, but Murphy—temporarily serving as a Cort justice—said it should have been done even if the *Constituziun* forbade it.

8. **Tom Buffone**, a new citizen friend of Wes Enrici’s—and a Leftist to boot—was very critical of the Dan/Bob reasoning in the Cort case, and King Robert tapped the completely unknown Buffone to become the RT’s eighth Prime Minister. He was sworn in on 21 September 1988, ending Murphy’s 228-day tenure.

9. His first challenge was a mass immigration of right-wing teenagers. Andrew Wozniak got his high school buddies **Ron Rosáis** and **Dave Kuenn** to join the RT; Rosáis gave little reason for joining beyond a desire to ‘crush communism.’ *Stotanneu* called Andrew’s disciples “Androids,” and they promised to bring ten more Androids into the country. The Cosâ tightened immigration laws, requiring a Cort interview of the prospective citizen, and a detailed “What Talossa Means to Me” essay. But Lorentz began moaning that “it’s all over” for RT leftism if the Cosâ let these Androids into the country; the issue helped bring Dan back into political activity after months of slumber.

10. Talossa celebrated its 9th birthday on 26 December 1988. Population grew from 22 to 26 that year, but in his Throne Speech the King conceded: “Nineteen eighty-eight was not our happiest year.” He praised Leftist Buffone and Rightist Wozniak for participating without “an anarchistic desire to trash the Big Ben Ego.” Buffone, in the only issue of his abortive third RT newspaper, *The Neophyte*, summed up the year: “Where else could you find an election challenged on the grounds that those who did not vote should receive inactive seats in parliament, and a party that wins 75% of the vote which names a potential opponent to the post of Prime Minister?”

11. The PC government’s job now was to heal the wounds of 1988’s “Bob Fights.” ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Thirty-One (January-July 1989) “The Buffone Era”

‘Mussolini once said, ‘Fascism is Mussolini.’ Well, Peculiarism is Dan.’

1. Tom Buffone (picture) quickly put his underlings in their place: He blocked Enrici’s plan to annex Shorewood and imposed sanctions on Ben’s beloved Iceland over whaling. But he moved forward with plans for a summer lakefront party, TalossaFest.

2. He also arranged a so-called Living Cosâ on 21 January 1989 at which MCs could meet and debate bills: Buffone, Madison, Eiffler, Lorentz and Kuenn (now of Yahn’s TNP) showed up. After voting on bills—in which Kuenn altered Yahn’s hand-written votes—the Living Cosâ was judged a success. But Lorentz sued the government for illegality: the *Constitutziun* said nothing about Living Cosâs. The Cort ruled that Lorentz was right, but Buffone refused Lorentz’s suggestion that the government, overcome with contrition, ought to dissolve itself and hold new elections. “I’m trying to figure out how to cause controversy in Talossa,” Lorentz was quoted as saying.

3. But Dan wanted back into power, and sent out a petition urging Buffone to call elections. Instead Tom simply amended the *Constitutziun* to allow Living Cosâs. Dan complained, again, that the Cosâ must ‘represent’ non-voters with empty seats, and called Buffone immoral for not doing this. Suddenly, Dan then quit RT politics, vowing never to return. The Right also fell apart. Yahn’s TNP now counted Androids Dave Kuenn and Ron Rosáis (collectively: “Davron”) as members. They demanded, *inter alia*, that Talossa brew nerve gas and assassinate Chinese leaders. But when Kuenn amended the TNP platform without Yahn’s approval in March, Yahn purged him. “Night of the long knives!” cackled *Stotannen*.

4. The PC predicted it would win a 2nd straight majority in upcoming elections, unless any Left party ran, “even some do-nothing vote sponge like the old Liberals.” On April 1, the King’s sister Jennifer, after prodding from Lorentz, declared her intention to “offer the voters apathy” as head of a **Talossan Sponge Party**. Lorentz, its lately “inactive” instigator, forecast a Sponge win and promised to serve in the Cosâ as a Sponge MC. “What a turn-coat!” exclaimed TNN.

5. The PC stressed its vision of Talossa as a community of Living Cosâs and TalossaFests. Sponge vowed to “give Ben a hard time”; its campaign was so dull that Murphy nearly ran another leftist party against it. Wozniak and Kuenn ran a **Talossan Activist Party** (TAP), bashing Yahn. Wes Enrici, fed up with Ben’s duplicity on not annexing Shorewood, broke to join the TNP. When it all ended on 14 May the PC had won half the vote: Buffone was reelected with no coalition. The TNP got a record-high 25%, Sponge 20% and TAP 5%. Turnout reached a new high of 20.

6. Lorentz had quit his seat on the Uppermost Cort, but now wanted it back. Right-wingers blocked his renomination, but PC leaders and Lorentz found an article in the *Constitutziun* which implied that Cort members can’t resign in the first place: so Dan was still on the Cort after all!

7. More entertaining were the circus antics of Dave Kuenn. On 15 May, Kuenn declared that he wanted to be King. The nation laughed. Then he complained that the real King “has totally no concept on how a deal is made,” and explained that when he demanded the Throne, all he really wanted was for Ben to

offer him, say, a seat in the Cosâ. As the King said, “In the last US election, George Bush asked voters to ‘read his lips.’ Dave wants me to read his mind.” His weird bills (e.g. banning Gays from the RT; mandatory tattoos) drew ridicule all year.

8. That April, Madison published *From Abbavilla to Zooks: A Lexicon of Talossan English*, a wide-ranging 38-page glossary of Talossan expressions like “RT”, “Cosâ”, “Soilitariat” and “Abbavilla Insider.” It soon had to be updated to include another one, namely, “Peculiarism.” For on 1 July Dan Lorentz returned yet again from retirement with yet another ideology. He claimed Talossa’s problems resulted from its “boring” King trying to make the RT a real country. So Dan offered “Peculiarism,” urging Talossa to be “interesting” by having empty Cosâ seats ‘represent’ non-voters, or having Talossa renounce physical space and become a Zen-like “afterglow.” All else was unimaginative “Derivatism”: “Shall Talossa be just another nation, or shall Talossa be Talossa?”

9. “I used to think that I was a cynic,” commented Buffone, “Till I met Dan and Bob. Then I realized I wasn’t even in the major league.” The King saw “Peculiarism” as a corrosive absurdity. Talossa *was* a country, or at least pretended to be. And as Ben pointed out, Dan was happy to keep the Cosâ, the flag, and other ‘real country’ features; “Peculiarism” was simply a label for Dan’s own weird esoteric tastes: “Peculiarism is simply ‘DAN LORENTZ’ written on a rainbow. It has no doctrine. It is not a philosophy. Mussolini once said, ‘Fascism is Mussolini.’ Well, Peculiarism is Dan.” Yahn put it more succinctly: “PECULIARISM IS TO TALOSSA WHAT TERMITES ARE TO WOOD!”

10. A Living Cosâ was held by the lake on 22 July, as part of TalossaFest. Things were not festive. *TNN* had just launched a spiteful attack on Buffone’s personal life, and people showed up in “bash Yahn” mode. Buffone quit as PM to devote more time (he said) to school. Deputy PM Jack Schneider was sworn in as PM over shouts of “*Save Rushdie!*” Davron denounced Yahn, tore up the TNP platform—and then Buffone let them join the PC to spite him.

11. The PC’s membership now stretched from Davron, who claimed to be Marines, to Jack Schneider, who was a Marxist. Enrici called it the “pot-pie blob” and it split, predictably, into pro-Ben and pro-Davron wings. Yahn denounced the King, threatened to quit Talossa (again) and bemoaned the fact that the PC seemed to be the only means to success. Personal bickering hit a new peak. And so, on 23 July 1989, the King announced he was personally dissolving the Cosâ in hopes that a new election would channel the vituperation back into the political arena.

12. Talossa faced “a crisis of public confidence in her leaders, her institutions, and her purpose,” the King told his loyal subjects. Would a new election help change any of this? ●●●

År Päts, Part Thirty-Two (August 1989-February 1990)
“The Hitler-Stalin Pact”

“I am King of the original dream.”

1. The campaign started in August 1989 with Davron’s rump “PC” and Lorentz’ **Peculiar Way** up against Schneider’s and Madison’s reorganized half of the PC, called the **Christian Democratic Party** — soon renamed the **Päts Vräts** (“Real Country”) after offending Talossa’s large atheist population.
2. PM Schneider (picture) campaigned on an eclectic agenda. He promised to team up with Yahn’s TNP on “moral issues” (banning smoking in the RT, for example), while trying to give Talossa’s 40,000 American “natives” or “Cestoûrs” the right to vote. He hoped this would overturn the RT’s “élitism,” but most RT citizens saw letting 40,000 “natives” outvote the 25 or so Talossans as absurd. “Apartheid” had worked well for many years in Talossa, and Jack’s speech offended everyone but Yahn, to whom Jack made an overt coalition pitch.
3. 20 voters went to the polls on 15 September 1989. As predicted, the Päts Vräts won only 40% of the vote. And as promised, Yahn and Schneider formed a coalition to keep Jack in power—and bring Yahn across the aisle from the opposition for the first time since 1985. *Stotanneu* called the team-up of Yahn and Jack the “Hitler-Stalin Pact.”
4. But Yahn joined the King and Lorentz in trying to talk Jack out of his Cestoûr vote scheme. Schneider pushed boldly ahead and on 15 November 1989, voting for a powerless Cestoûr Council began. As it turned out, only one person cast a ballot out of the 40,000 eligible to vote: Ben Madison, who voted for his own “Vote Don’t” party, which won every seat on the Council and promptly asked the Cosâ to dissolve it!
5. It was a humiliating defeat for Schneider, but hardly the last. Jack supported a Dan bill in the Cosâ which condemned “nationalism.” The King vetoed the bill, explaining that Talossa must not oppose “nationalism” since one of its definitions is simply “the desire for national independence.” The King noted that this bill would call Talossa’s very existence into question: “Because of something in common between us—I call it a sense of nationality—our political aspirations cannot be satisfied solely by our participation in American politics. Ergo, Talossa. To reject ‘nationalism’ would reject the profound sense that we are people whose lives would be less bright if there were no Talossan state.”
6. Schneider hit the ceiling and began phoning other Talossans, trying to rally them against the King. As the Living Cosâ scheduled for 30 December 1989 neared, tempers were flaring. Yahn tried to persuade Schneider to drop the whole Cestoûr Council matter and concentrate on the Peculiarists, who “want to demolish our present nationhood and throw Talossa on a funeral pyre of burning dictionaries!” But Schneider refused.
7. When Buffone, Madison, Eiffler, Lorentz, Murphy, Yahn, Andrew Wozniak and Davron assembled at the Living Cosâ on the afternoon of the 30th, they were badgered by the PM the moment they walked in the door. Jack threatened to resign if the bills banning smoking and setting up a constitutionally mandated Defence Ministry (a sop to Yahn) did not pass. Since the King by this time *wanted* Schneider to resign, he fished for excuses to vote against these bills, which he had earlier endorsed; the meeting

opened with Schneider currying favour with Davron, offering to ban *Stotanneu* from referring to them as “Androids.” This clumsy attempt to censor the press came out of pure opportunistic spite; the King vetoed it.

8. The Living Cosâ roundly approved the new citizenship of **Charmaine Chvala-Smith**, a left-wing Canadian whose essay spoke of “dual citizenship in countries obsessed with their own identity”; she bribed the Cort with delicious, gooey homemade snacks. But the rest of the business was acrimonious. The smoking and defence bills both went down in flames thanks to Ben’s flip-flops. And Dan’s attempt to override the veto of his anti-nationalism bill failed.

9. Schneider admitted defeat, dissolved the Cosâ and quit as PM. Tom Buffone was sworn in as his successor as the Living Cosâ came to a depressing end. Guests arrived for the RT’s 10th Anniversary party only to see the King’s Speech from the Throne become, with Schneider beaten, a verbose and panicked attack on Peculiarism. If Peculiars won the upcoming election, they might keep their promise and declare the RT a “weird thing” (their words) instead of a country. In that case, Ben warned, he might abdicate again—because he would serve only as King of Talossa, not King of a “weird thing.” “I am the King of a nation of dreamers, but I cannot be King of every dream.” So, he added later, “I am King of the original dream.”

10. Elections featured the Päts Vräts (Madison/Buffone), the Peculiar Way (Lorentz/Schneider) and the TNP. Dan, sensing victory, looked reasonable and talked of esoteric legal technicalities —while fielding referenda to abolish Talossa’s territorial existence and ‘represent’ non-voters by empty Cosâ seats. The King prophesied doom and reminded voters of the Peculiars’ promise to declare Talossa “spiritual plasma” rather than a country. Schneider (with Yahn’s help) sent out letters to citizens, bashing the King with rhetoric. Amazingly, this was the first time direct mail had ever been used in a Talossan campaign: an innovation that allowed the Peculiar Way to circumvent the PC-owned *Stotanneu* and helped make Talossa substantially less “Ben-centric.”

11. Talossa’s 22 voters split the difference on 14 February 1990 by electing the Peculiar Way (with only 50% of the vote) but rejecting its policies in the two referenda. The puzzled King called the results “a sheep in wolf’s clothing.” The Tories got only 36% of the vote; the TNP held the remaining 14%. Seventeen months of Tory rule had ended in disgrace, and now the nation was turning back to Dan Lorentz, demanding that he be the one to deal with all the scandals and personal bickering that threatened Talossa’s peace. ●●●

År Päts, Part Thirty-Three (February-September 1990) “Sponge-Soft Mushiness”

“There’s nothing left but this dried-up skin as Prime Minister.”

1. After a year and a half of PC (or Päts Vräts) rule, Talossa awoke on the morning of 15 February 1990 to discover the hapless Tories routed from power and the Peculiar Way—Dan Lorentz’ latest political incarnation —poised to form his first government since the collapse of the Peculiar Republic in 1987. Despite winning only 50% of the vote, Lorentz was sworn in as PM on 6 March 1990 in a quasi-coalition with Yahn, who was fuming about the King’s “deceit and arrogance.”

2. The first situation Dan faced was John Eiffler’s renunciation of his citizenship in a spasm of grief over the viciousness of the election. The King ignored Eiffler’s departure, essentially saying “good riddance” since Eiffler had voted Peculiar before quitting; Lorentz blamed Ben for the whole affair in his first Speech to the Nation on 12 March. But Lorentz vowed to help quell the vituperation—by this time a standard Talossan political promise—and then showed how: After serving only six days in office, Lorentz resigned! He appointed notorious do-nothing Harry Wozniak (picture) as his successor as Prime Minister, and disappeared.

3. The move stunned and even disappointed both Madison and Yahn. Yahn hoped to do deals with the new government, and pass legislation over the King’s helpless objections. But with Dan’s resignation, there was little government left to deal with. TNP deputy Enrici quipped that “Lorentz has slithered away, and there’s nothing left but this dried-up skin as Prime Minister.”

4. In the Cosâ, Wozniak’s new breeze of moderation was not immediately evident. The big parties kept wrangling over legislation. But Peculiar delegates soon drifted into inactivity and in March, only 62 of their 115 Cosâ seats voted. Only continued squabbling between Madison and Yahn kept them from teaming up to knock Wozniak out of power on the Vote of Confidence. In April, however, Yahn and Madison began a rapprochement and TNN denounced Wozniak’s somnambulant government as “plants” which ought to be “destroyed.”

5. But the Government was hardly unrepresentative of the country’s social climate. Ben, of course, was trying to prop up the country’s cultural life; his 193-page *La Scúrznîâ Gramáticâ del Glhep Talossán*, a grammar of the language packed with illustrations, rolled off the presses in February. But elsewhere, apathy was rife. Yahn found himself gravitating momentarily towards the centre of the political spectrum (thus wrecking his chance to recover the extremist votes of Davron) and veered away from things Talossan for the time being as he continued to rechart his political journey. Other Talossans had more mundane excuses, but not a single RT newspaper appeared in May and the same month, the Leftists almost completely abandoned ship. The May, 1990 Clark contained not a single bill, and the King and Yahn finally agreed that the Wozniak government was not worth saving. Only Charmaine Chvala-Smith turned up to support it; on a 74 to 10 vote, Wozniak became the first PM ever to be booted out of office on the Vote of Confidence. When told several days later what had happened, Wozniak reportedly burped “Oh, no!” and then vanished back into his beer.

6. In June the country geared up for a very strange election. The King’s party changed its name back to the Progressive Conservative Party—which name was still being used by the Davron schism; so two

different PCs contested the race. To compound the weirdness, Lorentz declared that he was personally all but giving up on Talossa and called for Talossa to “mutate” into an annual picnic and give up its political life. Tom Buffone, the King’s choice to be the next PM, disappeared.

7. The resulting vote was incredibly uninteresting. The Left was dead. Yahn’s TNP was still trumpeting its “firm, steel-hard leadership” but tried to form an alliance with the King’s PC, citing “considerable moderation and lack of any formal right-wing agenda,” while Davron proved uncharacteristically vapid (“get Talossa back to business”). The voting ended on 13 July 1990 with the King’s PC winning 125 seats, Davron’s 38 and the TNP 37 in the 200-seat Cosâ. Wes Enrici had quit the TNP when the King offered him the Prime Ministership out of desperation; there was barely anyone else active left in the country. Only 16 of 27 voters had voted.

8. It says a lot about the social climate of Talossa in the summer of 1990 that after elections ended on 13 July, with the rout of the incumbent government, the story was not reported in *Stotanneu* until 31 August, or in *TNN* until September! It can be frankly said Talossa was in the midst of a depression—the closest to an emotional depression this nation has ever witnessed. Not a single issue of *Stotanneu* was published between 23 June and 31 August. *TNN*, normally published every month, reported the election results in its “July-September” (!) issue, and dared hint at the possibility of “ceasing publication completely” owing to a lack of things to report. *Stotanneu* downplayed all this, claiming that nothing was wrong in Talossa, but Ben’s clumsy Kiwanis Club boosterism bore little fruit. Jean Williams said “*Talossa is dead*” while Brook Pànetâ said it ought to “fade like the Cold War.” Even Yahn was leaning toward the Lorentzian vision of Talossa as an “annual picnic at the lakefront” with no political system.

9. The country had to be reminded that it had just held an election in July. The King refused to swear in Prime Minister Enrici till Enrici wrote his Speech to the Nation—but relented out of desperation and swore him in at the end of September.

10. A few days after taking office, Enrici finally wrote his Speech which set out all too plainly the government’s official goals: Continuation of the Wozniak “enlightened apathy” policy. Enrici wistfully recalled his old Machiavellian dreams for a Talossan conquest of Shorewood but concluded that the modern moment called instead for a “kinder, gentler Talossa” which would meekly be “an enjoyable forum for us all.” He signed off “in Sponge-soft Mushiness,” as the nation wondered aloud: Was it time for Talossa to die? ●●●

Är Päts, Part Thirty-Four (September-December 1990)
“Death of a Nation?”

“How doth the city sit solitary, she that was full of people!”

1. Even as Enrici (picture, with the King) offered “enlightened apathy” to the nation, Dan Lorentz deserted it once again. He resigned his one Cosâ seat and proclaimed, “I just don’t care about Talossa!” The King saw the whole apathy phenomenon as simply the latest malevolent political position Lorentz had espoused, but he could hardly blame Dan for the fact that Enrici’s 22 October Living Cosâ couldn’t find a quorum due to absentees. It did so a week later, and Yahn soiled himself with bills calling for the Germans to reconquer Europe, and for Talossa to assassinate a local alderman who himself had threatened to assassinate commuters. The PC balked and a serious PC-TNP rift occurred.

2. The only truly important bill on the October Clark was a “National Destiny Referendum Act,” a nonbinding, nationwide referendum to allow Talossans to choose between one of three potential futures for Talossa: Continuing “as is,” surrendering to apathy by going back to a “royal dictatorship,” or, lastly, resolving that “Talossa has outlived its usefulness and should cease to exist, passing into history.”

3. By all rational standards, that should have overshadowed all other legislation on the October Clark, but this is Talossa. The October Living Cosâ showcased the TNP as the zany party of urban terrorism and the Fourth Reich. It was evident to all from Yahn’s last sparkling burst of fanaticism that while Yahn’s take on politics might have changed, the TNP’s had not. In the King’s eyes, and those of most Talossans, the TNP remained what it had always been, a fringe party. Its Big Huge Birds and *Triumph of the Will* soundtrack and vaguely swastika-like emblems remained, as did its radioactive reputation.

4. So November, 1990, which one can fairly say was the nadir of Talossa’s existence to that point, began with John Yahn resigning as an Uppermost Cort Justice, as Secretary of State, and as head of the Talossan National Party. *Talossan National News* (TNN) ceased publication on 7 November, and Yahn expressed his regret for “the obvious decline and impending fall of our Talossan State as we know it.” Yahn proclaimed:

“I am disgusted with the status quo, from which there is no possible escape save a further spiraling into the abyss. Talossa has simply lost its fire, its raison d’être. Personally, I am insulted by the lack of respect the PC has shown me over the years. Despite my extreme level of commitment, patriotism and involvement, I have remained an outsider at best—a scapegoat at worst. In light of all this, it is time to quit.”

5. While Yahn’s right was collapsing, Dave Kuenn, leader of his own right-wing ‘Progressive Conservative’ splinter, dashed off a strongly worded “angry reply” to the King, blaming the “imminent destruction” of Talossa on the King and “a few jerks who ruin the fun for others.”

6. On 15 November 1990 the Destiny Referendum began. Ben lamented the RT’s current woes in Biblical terms: “How doth the city sit solitary, she that was full of people! How is she become as a widow, she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!” He called for voters to rally behind a living, democratic Talossa because, he wrote, “without Talossa in our lives, we shall become pale and uninteresting.” He was almost alone, forcing the feeding tubes into the unwilling patient despite all around him becoming “realistic” about Talossa’s “inevitable”

doom. It was precisely his own lack of “realism,” of course, that kept Talossa alive in the next crucial months. But its pulse kept on weakening; Lorentz quit as a Cort justice on 24 November, and six days later, Foreign Minister Bill Renzi died!

7. As if to add insult to injury, Davron began a new (and abortive) Talossan newspaper on 26 November 1990, called *The Integrity*. It consisted largely of personal attacks on King Robert for not naming Dave Kuenn King—and a detailed “fecal log” that explained in depth the frequency and consistency of Kuenn’s bowel movements. This was no substitute for *TNN*.

8. Only 13 citizens voted, but the Destiny Referendum ended on 14 December 1990 with a resounding “yes” for Talossa. 84.6% of voters backed Ben’s call for a living, democratic Talossa. Yahn and Madison’s sister supported the “royal dictatorship” option, but nobody voted to kill off Talossa.

9. For the thankful King at least, the referendum breathed new life into Talossa, and he was able to write his annual Throne Speech on the nation’s 11th birthday, 26 December 1990, with considerably more optimism than he had expected:

“While much in Talossa is inherently hard to believe, it still seems hard to believe that we are now into our twelfth year of sovereignty and still plugging away at it. However, the sound of our plugging has changed in the past year, as has its pace. What Talossa tells us now, in her falsely-rumoured twilight, is that the greatest irony of Talossan history, perhaps, is that for some, Talossa is far too ‘real’ for their tastes. We, the survivors, the blemished, the persistent members of a community who refuse to quit: We are proud to say that we’re still here. Why? Perhaps precisely because we like ourselves, and each other. Let 1991 be our greatest year yet, and here’s a toast to another year of plugging away at Talossa.”

10. That same *Stotanneu* also contained a letter from Andrew Wozniak, and quotations from Yahn, Schneider, Pànetà, Buffone, Yarney, Chvala-Smith, Williams, Enrici, Harry Madison, Lorentz and, of course, the King. When 1990 finally ended, there was still a community called Talossa. December 1990 was the month when things began to change. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Thirty-Five (January-July 1991) “Yahn Unleashed”

“I could run amok in this office, but I haven’t the inclination to do so.”

1. Tentative optimism continued into January, 1991. After quitting his oodles of rôles, John Yahn (picture) in December had voted “no confidence” in PM Enrici’s government and demanded new elections. In January, however, he changed his mind and said “yes” to keeping the PC in office another month. The Clark that month forced two wayward provinces—Kuenn’s Atatürk, which hadn’t held required elections in years, and Yahn’s Pórt Maxhestic, which wouldn’t dream of holding elections—to submit to democratic rule. The King seized power in Atatürk, but in Pórt Maxhestic, Charmaine Chvala-Smith arose to topple half a decade of Yahnocracy, defeating Yahn humiliatingly after he denounced her as “weak and feminine.” Yahn had to flee to neighboring Maritiimi, which he quickly reworked in his own image.

2. The Cosâ also amended the *Constituziun* to allow write-in candidacies in elections, part of Ben Madison’s plan to encourage political participation. The barely active Enrici was approved as Yahn’s successor on the Cort, though the Cosâ warned that “jumper cables” might be needed to “activate” him. But by February, something unheard-of was happening: Yahn and the King jointly sponsored bills to revoke Talossa’s recognition of an independent Palestine, and to join George Bush Senior’s war on Iraq (whose defeat was only a matter of time; why let the U.S. get all the glory?). PM Enrici declared war on Iraq in February.

3. On 15 January Dave Kuenn sent an odd letter to John Yahn, ostensibly apologizing for various mean-spirited remarks. He bashed the King, threatened to quit Talossa, and urged Yahn not to “comprimize”[sic] with the King. But the bigoted anal-phase nuttiness of *The Integrity* gave Yahn the peculiar experience of being outflanked from the Right. In US politics—which means more in Talossa than many realize—Yahn had also moved away from the fundamentalist right wing during his socio-political conversion the previous year. He came to identify more with moderate-right positions that King Robert had also wobbled into in recent years; at least for the time being, the two could now talk politics without arguing.

4. *Stotannen* soon reported that Enrici “probably” would not seek re-election: “John Yahn, who has been cozying up to the PC for months, is seen as the most likely candidate to take over the PM-ship in the event of a PC victory (Yahn was last PM in 1985 and is positively drooling at the prospect).”

5. At the time it still seemed like a desperate move; the King really had nobody else to turn to for Prime Minister. But the alliance was cemented in mid-February with the announcement that the King’s former ally, Tom Buffone, would run his own hippy leftist party against the centre-right PC in the election set for March. The King joked that Buffone offered the country “Reggae government.” Actually both parties stressed the same themes: Buffone’s **Un-Named Party** (UP) sought to “reactivate” the country while the PC sought a “revitalized” country. *Stotannen*, of course, endorsed Yahn:

“Whatever his extremist bizarrities may have been (and may still be), Yahn has been consistently impressive as a leader, a statesman, and above all an active, informed and interested Talossan citizen. At this moment in our nation’s history all who are truly Talossan cry out for leadership that is active, informed and interested. Yahn’s enthusiasm for Talossa,

despite political disillusionment and last year's resignation as Secretary of State, has been unflagging. He deserves a chance."

6. Buffone reaped his harvest among left-wingers for whom Yahn was still a pariah, but the Tories captured a majority of the 13 ballots cast and won handily with 108 seats to the UP's 92. Yahn took office as PM on 20 April 1991, picking Hitler's birthday as an "in your face" to the spooked Leftists. (Enrici urged him to wait a week and a half, till the anniversary of Hitler's suicide.) His government got off the ground slowly, its first Clark not appearing until June. Yahn addressed the people in sober and tentative words which turned out rather odd compared to the dramatic upsurge in activity which his government would see. Yahn touted his "history of unquestioned involvement and commitment" to the RT, and promised that "I could run amok in this office, but I haven't the inclination to do so. Besides, I was not elected to smash the system—to reform, reorganize, renew, rebuild. Rather, to retain."

7. On 1 May Yahn urged more parties—social ones, not political ones—"to 'revive' Talossans to some extent, and renew friendships as well." The "New Yahn" proclaimed his "seemingly irrevocable movement leftwards." His increasing social openness went hand-in-hand with concentration on parties and community as vital to RT identity and survival. Not all was positive: the nation gaped as Yahn and Enrici bickered over whether Frank Sinatra or Gloria Estefan should be the RT's "National Entertainer"; Enrici (and Gloria) won, for the moment. But the revival was genuine. Jack Schneider, who peppered the press with erudite and opaque legal complaints, stepped up to fill Dan Lorentz' empty seat on the Uppermost Cort, while Dan himself returned to the Cosâ after a long absence. Yahn also replaced the mathematically inept Ben Madison as Secretary of State.

8. The image of Yahn as Moses, leading the people out of apathy, began brilliantly on 20 July, when nine Talossans gathered at Talossa's lakefront for the annual TalossaFest, an afternoon of cooking out, snacking, music (Estefan *et al.*) and Talossa-oriented conversation. Yahn declared it "a wonderful success" and helped make it a permanent part of the RT social landscape. The atmosphere was very positive, perhaps due to the fact that a Living Cosâ was not held at the same time. It was sedate, pleasant, and fun: People were there to enjoy being Talossan. No one could mistake the facts. Talossa was back! ●●●

Ár Páts, Part Thirty-Six (August 1991-January 1992)
“Re-Energization”

“Besides, I’m above negative campaigning.”

1. Yahn’s community spirit continued on 13 August 1991 when the Old Country Buffet (“OCB”) in Brookfield, Wisconsin, hosted an “OCB Forum” on the *Constituziun*, attended by Yahn, Buffone, Schneider, Madison and Enrici. Schneider and Buffone were plotting to keep the King’s ‘disruptive influence’ out of elections. “They want to tie me to a tree in Downer Woods for a month,” claimed Madison, who used the occasion to unveil a “bill of rights,” the **Covenants of Rights and Freedoms**. Its 19 “Covenants” covered almost every right imaginable, including guaranteeing assisted suicide and bashing Creationism. It also banned “affirmative action” as racist and prohibited hippy protests. Voters later approved it all by a 77% majority with Communist Jack Schneider dissenting, objecting to the provision that said that only the government (and not idealistic Red Guards) could confiscate private property.

2. Voters went to the polls on 30 September and approved a referendum to allow the Cosâ to strip “dead” people of their citizenship, a book-keeping measure to eliminate people from the rolls who hadn’t been seen or heard of for years. Words were exchanged when it was found a week later that Tom Buffone had tried to vote, but left his ballot at Ben’s house while Ben was out of town as the other ballots were counted. Ben urged Tom to sue the Secretary of State so a formal decision could be rendered. But like so many “aggrieved” Leftists, Buffone took out his frustrations on Talossa and the King rather than using the rules of the game to obtain justice.

3. On 12 October 1991 the Living Cosâ met for the first time in a year. Buffone, Yahn, Enrici, Madison, and Schneider attended and debated 10 bills. Debate on an excruciatingly complex Schneider bill to strip the King of his veto took over an hour. It vaguely demanded that Ben and Yahn go into the *Constituziun* and figure out exactly what needed to be changed for it to become law! It died on a party-line vote. Other bills included Schneider blasting Capitalism as un-Christian; another Jack bill proposed a secret ballot—it was so baffling it had to be withdrawn before a vote. And Talossa adopted what is purportedly the world’s most liberal Gay rights law.

4. In November, the Cosâ approved a bill liberalizing the nation’s electoral system, over the mass abstentions of the Left. It empowered all party leaders to distribute ballots, giving to all the power Ben once reserved to himself. Of course, the Left saw this as another evil plot to increase Ben’s powers. But soon the abstentionist Left started unspooling again. Lorentz and Buffone refused to run in the next elections—and Buffone refused to take seats in the next Cosâ. Speculation that Jack Schneider would rally the troops proved unfounded, and the PC entered the election unopposed for the first time in history.

5. The PC was solid behind their leader, John Yahn, while the King was doing his best to convince Yahn the PC actually could still lose. Campaigning started in mid-December; voters were greeted only by Tory campaign literature which begged them to support Yahn rather than plunge the RT “into yet another Sargasso Sea of Dan-inspired backbiting.” The PM stood amidst a froth of statistics and spoke of higher themes:

"I honestly feel I have earned both the votes of those Citizens who supported me last summer, and those who did not. I cannot specifically denounce any organized opposition to my reelection plans, because so far there isn't any. Besides, I'm above negative campaigning. Rather, I stand on my record, alongside the King and my other allies, and ask for your honest appraisal. I hope and trust I've earned your vote, and I hope you'll allow me to remain your Prime Minister."

6. The King gave his annual Speech from the Throne on 26 December 1991, the Kingdom of Talossa's 12th birthday:

"Talossa's canvas has always had the ability to highlight the two kinds of artists who paint her: community-builders and community-users. Tom Buffone and Jack Schneider have opted out of an active rôle in the process for now. Whether they will go down in history as builders or users of Talossa remains to be seen, and Talossans who need their balancing voices are urged to urge them to speak up for balance."

7. In an effort at canvas-painting, the PM tried to help the Leftists out with a party to celebrate Talossa's birthday. After all, they won their Cosâ seats by endorsing "apolitical functions such as Independence Day celebrations." But the ever-baffling mood swings of the Left had swung again, and they refused to come! Instead, they set up a rival party with no Talossan trappings. Madison showed up with ballots and was jeered; Leftists who refused to run denounced the vote as a "sham" since only the PC was on the ballot. But, thanks to the PC, write-in votes were now legal. Bob Murphy ran the **Spastic Progressives Against Regressive Konservatives**, or SPARK. Buffone ran a one-man **Anarchist Party**. Others wrote "Mickey Mouse" in as a joke, refusing to vote. Macht and Lorentz realized they could form a **Mickey Mouse Movement** and claim those votes, representing, Macht wrote, "those who have seemed ambivalent and apathetic and who will rise to remind the powers that be that nothing is for certain in Talossa." Jack Schneider created a **Social, Economic and International Responsibility Party** (SEIRP), derided as 'syrup.' He was a day late in handing in his ballot, but Secretary Yahn generously counted it anyway. Jack then accused Yahn of "corruption" for allowing him to vote, claiming that counting votes against the PC somehow unfairly helped the PC. Only in Talossa.

8. On 14 January 1992 our most hotly contested election in two years ended with the Cosâ evenly split between the PC and a host of Leftists; SEIRP, SPARK and the Anarchists won 7% of the vote each, while 'Mickey Mouse' got 29%. Yahn clung to power on a technicality: a 50/50 tie counts as a win for the incumbent. Turnout was up (to 14), people were active — and it was clear the RT had truly been "re-energized" as PM Yahn proclaimed. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Thirty-Seven (January-July 1992)
“Personal Fantasy Fiefdoms”

“The Left really doesn’t want, or know how to use, political power.”

1. Yahn followed up his re-election with a makeshift 12th Anniversary party attended by six Talossans including, oddly, Davron, the right-wing Marine wannabees who stormed out of RT politics in 1990 calling Yahn a “Homo-Nazi” and Madison a “boring jerk” who had “ruined” the RT by not making Dave its king. They provoked the first big split in Yahn’s government by asking for two Cosâ seats from the PC. Although the PC would have to rely on Davron’s loyalty to preserve its razor-thin majority, Ben and Wes persuaded Yahn (against his good judgment) to give them seats. It was another example of Ben Madison trying to get as many citizens involved as possible regardless of their politics. Enrici downplayed their potential mischief (“They could be Karl Marx and Lenin, but they’ve got *one seat each!*”), but it was in fact a ruinous idea.

2. The Tories also gave away seats to John Eiffler, who had left Talossa in disgust in 1990 over excessive spilling of personal vitriol. He was welcomed back by those who still saw him as something of the “conscience of Talossa.” PM Yahn celebrated the uptick in national vibes in a February speech, in which he noted the return of so many active citizens:

“It’s perhaps too early to speak of ‘morning in Talossa,’ but I don’t think it’s too far fetched to say that our Kingdom is better off than it was before I became Prime Minister. And the best is yet to come (I can hear the chants already: ‘No third term! No third term!’) We’ll see about that.”

3. Unfortunately, happy time gives way so easily to silly time in Talossa and much of Yahn’s second term was spent in pitched battles with Davron’s revived right-wing screed *The Integrity*. Davron launched a series of savage personal attacks on Yahn, while Madison sprang to Yahn’s defence by quoting Hamlet and suggesting they used steroids, to which Davron reacted in horror, fearing a plot by the King of Talossa to have them thrown out of the US Marine Corps. All three newspapers—*Stotanneu*, *The Integrity*, and *TNN* (which Yahn revived that January)—were consumed by this bizarre morality play for months, which amounted mostly to name-calling on all sides, punctuated by frantic appeals for Davron to be “tolerant” while they accused Yahn of “necrophilia” and Madison of “childishness and lesbianism.” It was not Talossa’s finest hour.

4. Despite the escalating verbiage, Kuenn and Rosáis kept their word, voting “yes” on February’s VOC in Yahn’s government. That month, the Cosâ finally restored to the *Constitutziun* the right of native-born Talossans, or “Dandelions,” to become Talossan voters upon reaching maturity. Not that the RT had a problem attracting immigrants; for the first time since 1989, a new player took the stage. **Nik Kovac**, a quasi-leftist high school debater from Riverside, was inducted into Talossa that spring. The Left looked longingly at him as a possible new leader—a Wunderkind to do the job of attacking the PC while Lorentz and Buffone could plop back into comfortable apathy again.

5. Irked by Yahn’s lack of enthusiasm for their proposed “Talossan Chess Championship,” roommates Harry Wozniak, Bob Murphy and Dan Lorentz suddenly declared on 21 March 1992 that their apartment was “seceding” from Vuode Province and forming “Bradford Province”! By the 9th of May, Vuode and Bradford had reluctantly settled their border dispute and the new Province was recognized,

in time for the ten-man chess fiesta to take place. Wes Enrici defeated Nik Kovac to win the event. Yahn did not attend; he was busy fending off abstruse and ridiculous court challenges from the increasingly paranoid Jack Schneider.

6. That same month, Ben Madison published the most detailed and comprehensive work ever done on Talossan history. *The First Decade*, a profusely illustrated update/rewrite of Ben's **History of the Kingdom of Talossa**, took 176 pages to tell Talossa's story from 1979 to February of 1990. *TNN* commented: "*A pinch of salt here or there, and this first volume is delicious!*"

7. Half of Talossa showed up for a cookout and Living Cosâ on 30 May. Debate on bills was as usual bizarre, with the anti-King Left voting down the King's bill that would have given all the King's power to a President elected by the Left. Yahn called their move "the biggest indication ever that the Left really doesn't want, or know how to use, political power." The Cosâ also faced a crucial Vote of Confidence. The Tories had taken a huge risk handing over so many seats to Eiffler, Kovac, and Davron. The defection of one seat could kill Yahn's government; here Talossa's ruling party had acted selflessly rather than crassly. But re-energization's bats were coming home to roost in Talossa's legislative belfry, because the Left benefitted most from the huge upsurge in activity.

8. Treacherous Davron broke their promise and voted "no" on the May 1992 VOC, but when they were joined by left-wing PC Cosâ Member John Eiffler, PM Yahn quickly dissolved the Cosâ and called new elections to avert a humiliating defeat on the Vote of Confidence. The Left, totally re-energized, launched a vigorous campaign. Davron joined them, ran as "champions of evil," and vanished. No matter; Buffone and Lorentz flamed the PC as corrupt, warmongering, and even somehow anti-abortion. The Un-Named Party (UP)'s grotesque, incendiary falsehoods set a new low in RT politics: "*We've got to have leadership that encourages participation in Talossa. We must prevent Talossa from becoming the personal fantasy fiefdom of Yahn, Ben and their militaristic and bureaucratic allies.*" Yahn's government had given its own life away handing over Cosâ seats to all its enemies in an effort to involve as many Talossans as possible. Accusing the PC of discouraging participation was really offensive and dishonest. The letter rankled Yahn and Madison to no end, but it did the trick.

9. 17 votes were counted on 14 July 1992. The UP knocked the PC out of power and, failing to win a majority itself, formed a coalition with Jack Schneider's SEIRP party, ending two unbroken years of PC rule. *Stotanneu* sermonized: "A fog of illegitimacy hangs heavy over this new régime. We just hope their conduct and their bills show that they are truly as concerned about Talossa and participation as they were with getting elected. May Talossa survive this government!" ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Thirty-Eight (July 1992-January 1993)
“Vindictism”

“...a mind Jesuits would envy.”

1. The UP-SEIRP coalition government of PM Tom Buffone took office in July of 1992 across the aisle from a bitter and angry PC Opposition. A moderate **‘Minor’ity Party** (MP), started by new high school citizens Nik Kovac and **Andrew Worm**, what Yahn called the “big imponderable” in the new Cosâ, remained aloof from both sides.

2. Buffone started things off by refusing to hold TalossaFest or write a Speech to the Nation, any government’s normal first step. He then left all his party’s Cosâ seats vacant by failing to tell SoS Yahn whether anyone would occupy them. But the Clark went out to all registered as Cosâ Members, which so far included only the PC, the ‘Minor’ity Party, and Jack Schneider. The VoC held at the end of August revealed a total of 24 votes “for” and 55 “against”: Tom Buffone had been voted out of office after only a month in power!

3. Buffone called the vote “illegal,” claiming he hadn’t “authorized” the Clark in the first place. However, members of his party, suspecting they *might* have seats, had already tried to vote on it. The Cort untangled this mess and pissed off both Buffone and his rival Yahn by ruling that the Clark was legal, but giving Buffone a second chance on the Vote of Confidence. The government was saved, but Buffone railed against the decision anyway. Justice Jack Schneider, who voted in the majority for the compromise, was soon beaten into a froth by his coalition partner Buffone, and he too began railing against the very Cort of which he was a member.

4. The result was an outbreak of gridlock in the Cosâ as UP members voted against anything PC regardless of its merits. To circumvent the Cosâ, Buffone issued a series of unpopular PD’s—legal edicts—overturning various laws. Tories denounced these undemocratic efforts, but though he objected to nearly every one of them, the King signed them into law, bowing to the PM’s moral authority. But when Buffone issued a PD negating the Cosâ’s support for the US presidential campaign of Bill Clinton, the King balked and demanded the Cosâ be able to vote on this vital issue. He vetoed the PD, using his veto pen for the first time in many years.

5. Ben was also active on the cultural front. The first Talossan-language song with its own tune, *Chirluschâ àl Glibep*, was published on 13 September 1992. This hymn’s English words failed to catch on; but rewritten in 2004, the song would become Talossa’s national anthem in 2005.

6. At the same time, Talossans were confronted with a Royal referendum on “national identity,” asking them to officially define Talossa as “a community of persons having fun by doing things which are reasonably similar to what other (‘real’) countries do—whether for reasons of tourist nostalgia, out of a lust for power, or in pursuit of parody.” The King considered this moderate statement a repudiation of any “peculiarist government” that denied Talossa’s true country nature. He also warned that rejection of the referendum by Leftist obstructionists could have dire but unspecified consequences.

7. A big majority approved the referendum—but, thanks to Tom and Dan, it was one vote shy of the two-thirds it needed. Under investigation by Buffone’s Attorney General Bob Murphy, the King

declared his home province, Vuode, to be a sovereign, independent Principality that was seceding from Talossa! The King reasoned: Buffone refused to accept that Talossa was really a nation. Therefore, he couldn't complain if Vuode violated what the *Constituziun* called "national" law. "I will admit it does seem like you've managed to come up with something pretty clever," Lorentz conceded; he later denounced Vuode's "Unilateral Proclamation of Secession" as "bewilderingly complex and ambiguous," the product of "a mind Jesuits would envy." Vuode hoisted its "national" flag (picture) on the wall of Ben's attic office at Vuode Palace.

8. Meanwhile, Buffone was confronted with the resignation of John Yahn as Secretary of State. Nik Kovac had submitted some very long bills to the Clark, and the law put a fee on such big bills. But Kovac refused to pay, and the PM refused to enforce the law, so Yahn quit out of disgust with Buffone's fiasco-ridden administration. Lorentz took over as Secretary of State.

9. Tempers boiled over on 16 November 1992 when King Robert dissolved the Cosâ. The government ignored him, claiming the King was no longer a Talossan citizen! The King claimed a "junta" had seized control; the country spun into a constitutional impasse with the King and Lorentz suing each other in the Uppermost Cort. The King argued that only if Talossa is a real country and Kingdom, was Vuode's secession illegal; he asked the Cort to rule that Talossa is a country and that Dan's "Peculiarism" was an invalid philosophy, which the Cort (Enrici, Schneider and Kovac) proceeded to do enthusiastically. With his point thus affirmed, Ben gave up Vuode's "Glorious 21 Days" of rebel posturing. The Cort did convict him of treason but only forbade him to vote on one Clark, since he was a "first time offender."

10. But before the King could not vote on the November Clark, PM Buffone decided to utterly perplex the nation. He dissolved the Cosâ and called elections two months early. *TNN* exulted: "The UP leadership has lost its way and it's been blown asunder in the aftermath." Voting began with Dan boasting that the UP would get two-thirds of the vote and strip the King of all his powers; this after refusing to strip him of *any* of his powers only months earlier. Madison led a manic, tireless campaign: scarcely a week into the election, the PC had seized enough votes to dash any hope of a UP victory, and turnout had surged to 23 voters. Given the UP's adverts in this election—as misleading as the last time—the Tories found this especially sweet.

11. On 14 January 1993, the PC and UP won 87 seats apiece. The 'Minor'ity Party of Kovac and Worm held the balance of power—and coalesced with the PC, bringing Yahn back as PM. After the frenetic election, Tom's failure to win Kovac's support, and the shaky coalition the PC now led, *Stotannen* remarked: "It just doesn't get any weirder than this." Oh, yes it does! ●●●

År Päts, Part Thirty-Nine (January-October 1993) “The Tunguska Event”

“Tom, Jack: You blew it. End of story.”

1. On 19 January 1993, newly-restored PM Yahn issued a Clintonesque Speech to the Nation, expecting to preside over “a relatively tranquil period of government.” Unbeknownst to him, Tom Buffone had just received a letter from the notoriously chimerical Brook Pànetâ (picture), who had voted PC by submitting a VIA Form (an absentee ballot). But the letter charged that Yahn had somehow “controllingly” forged Brook’s vote! Talossa was stunned. Would the election results have to be changed? A flurry of phone calls revealed that Yahn was livid, Lorentz confused, Buffone bloodthirsty, Kovac perturbed, and Madison perplexed. Only the Cort could untangle this mess.

2. Kovac threatened to pull out of the coalition. He conceded the PC had been “perfectly legal” in swearing Yahn in as soon as the election was over, but blamed the King for moving so quickly, as if somehow Brook’s bolt from the blue could be anticipated. Tom Buffone, meanwhile, declared Yahn guilty, refused to take his own Cosâ seats, claimed he was still PM, and ended up abandoned by Dan Lorentz who condemned “the vindictism of people like Tom and Jack” and made it quite clear that Yahn was the country’s legal PM. Yahn denounced Buffone’s “ridiculous shenanigans” as “absurd and peevish.”

3. Both Yahn and Madison filed chronologies of events to show how Yahn could not possibly have forged Brook’s ballot. Yahn suggested Pànetâ be committed to “the Robert Dobberpuhl Home for the Insane,” and wrote a psychoanalysis of his erstwhile friend; Madison focused on legal issues and assumed the rôle of Defence Attorney for Yahn in the expected Cort case.

4. Ben Madison, meanwhile, was separating the Monarchy from the Judiciary. He quit the Uppermost Cort, and Nik Kovac was named his successor. It was Kovac’s only success all year. With the UP refusing to take seats, the PC dominated the “rump” Cosâ. Kovac’s power broker rôle was nullified since there was no live opposition he could threaten to join. The Left collapsed in an orgy of self-recrimination while Kovac, in true RT Leftist style, blamed it all on the PC. The PC eventually tired of his carping and passed a law abolishing the need for a quorum in the Cosâ, which rendered Kovac mathematically irrelevant; by showing up to vote *contrâ* on the bill instead of not showing up at all, he gave the PC the quorum it needed to pass the law.

5. Equally baffling was what *TNN* called “The case of the missing case.” The “hang ’em high” Leftists proved utterly incapable of bringing Yahn to trial in the Brook ballot case, beyond, as *TNN* put it, “ranting to third parties about vague threats of illegitimacy, lies and deceit.” The statute of limitations would expire on 14 April, after which Yahn could not be prosecuted. As everyone predicted, the Left never got their act together; the deadline passed with no trial. The issue that convulsed Talossa for months was quietly buried. *Stotanneu* gave it only the briefest mention: “Tom, Jack: You blew it. End of story.” Leftists managed to blame Ben Madison, who was neither judge, jury, defendant, or plaintiff, for the collapse of their case. Evidently it was “Ben’s responsibility” as founder of Talossa to make sure they prosecuted his client.

6. With abject rule of the Cosâ insured by the refusal of 87 UP seats to vote, the Tory Juggernaut rolled

its big guns onto the May 1993 Clark. They gave the King a limitless Wisconsin-style line item veto, insured automatic succession to the Throne with no approval of an heir by referendum (making it easier for King Robert to abdicate again if he chose), and enacted the “Three Strikes Law” expelling apathetic citizens if they failed to vote in three straight elections. They created a national police, and a tongue-in-cheek holiday to honour Mussolini! This proved too much for Kovac and Worm, who never returned to politics in any significant sense.

7. Jack Schneider—subject of *TNN* exposés for his rabbit-killing frenzies, communism, and bizarre eating habits—lashed out at the country’s leaders in a withering diatribe. He cursed the PC as a cabal of “Nazis and Fascists,” and vowed to throw away any RT newspapers coming to his door. Next he vowed to gum up the business of the Cort by not participating. The Cosâ booted him off the Cort in June by a vote of 102-10—replacing him with his arch-enemy Yahn.

8. For a moment it looked like the Left would revive. Lorentz warned Talossa was in a “serious wane” and announced a “Grain of Salt Party” for the upcoming election. He and Kovac each lazily begged the other to run; in the end, neither even bothered to vote. The Left next sabotaged the 1993 TalossaFest by scheduling a rival party at the other end of the park; Yahn’s “relatively tranquil” government ended in August with a blaze of insignificance enlivened only by the naturalization of the King’s friend and fellow Latter Day Saint **Gary Swedenborg**.

9. The election of 14 October 1993 was utterly pointless. The paranoid PC warned about a last-minute Leftist surge, but there was no surge. Leftists refused to vote. Only Brook turned out to vote against the PC (and for his own **Atheist Pantheist Party**) after the King publicly begged him to run against the PC to maintain a veneer of opposition. With Brook’s ballot physically confirmed, voting ended with the lowest turnout in history: only 31% of eligible voters voted for parties. The PC won an embarrassing 178 seats, with 89% of the vote, to Pànetà’s 22. *TNN* called it “The Tunguska Event.” Voters also lopsidedly passed referenda scrapping the Vague Principles (the last vestige of Leftism in the *Constituziun*) and officially defining Talossa the way the King had wanted before Vuode’s ‘secession’ the previous year.

10. But the big news was the horrid turnout: only 11 voters. 23 had voted at the last election. *TNN*—ever the doomsayer to *Stotannen*’s forced glee—wondered whether anyone would ever rise “to challenge the massive PC power machine. Whether this is good or bad for our nationette remains to be seen.” Nobody knew it, of course, but the PC would run Talossa with majority governments for the next ten years, and then forget how to lose elections gracefully. ●●●

År Päts, Part Forty (October 1993-June 1994)
“Dave Gets The Party”

“We’re totally united. One solid will.”

1. Things were gloomy. Not even the Great Depression of 1990 saw voter turnout so abysmal. The triumphant PC had a near-record 38 vacant Cosâ seats for want of warm bodies to fill them, but by the time November’s Cosâ business began the PC had dragooned John Eiffler into taking most of them. Eiffler also replaced the inactive Kovac on the Uppermost Cort.

2. In an ingenious move to keep some folks active and to provide headlines for the papers, Ben Madison gave up his infallible rulership of the PC and invited John Yahn and Wes Enrici to become equal partners in Talossa’s oldest party. On 23 November the three held an official *Siançâ* (meeting) and a week later they adopted party Bylaws. Involvement was also stressed in the King’s annual Speech, given at a moderately-attended 14th Anniversary Party on 11 December 1993:

“Let’s face it: You’re not all here because you want to be here; you’re here because you want Talossa to be here. People should wake up in the middle of the night screaming about Talossa. Talossa is a place where we grownups can pretend to be children who are pretending to be grownups. But the game is not for everyone at every moment. While it’s been a strain on friendships over the years, Talossa has also been a catalyst for friendship—would we all be together tonight if it were not for Talossa? This is one more affirmation for all of us here and for those not here who wish us well, that we are a people whose lives would be less bright were it not for this thing in our midst that draws us together called Talossa.”

3. Meanwhile, old faces reappeared. In January 1994, Nik Kovac and Andrew Worm sent *Stotanneu* some bizarre letters about groping each other in caves. Five days later, Davron returned, declaring incidentally to the King that rape was normal male behaviour. “I heard it from Davron, and they heard it from feminists, so it must be true,” muttered the King, who suspected the next election might be more lively than the last.

4. In February the Cosâ made Ben’s attic computer room, “Electrabase,” the nation’s capital. It also formally “killed off” five citizens not heard from in years, the first in a slew of absent or inactive citizens to be officially “beheaded.” **John McGarry**, the newest citizen, offered a bill on “Cool Space Stuff,” which made him look goofy. And PM Yahn decided to step down from the post he had held so long and let the burdens of state be shouldered by the moderate and quiet Gary Swedenborg (picture). A Living Cosâ was scheduled for 26 March at which the transition would be accomplished.

5. In the Cosâ everything was hunky-dory for the PC, but outside, Davron’s return was having predictable results. The King handed them Atatürk Province in a generous offer; they responded by blasting him for *Stotanneu*’s report on their rape endorsement.

6. The Living Cosâ of 26 March was full of all manner of constitutional arcana, all outclassed by the resignation of PM John Yahn. He and the King gave speeches to extol Yahn’s virtues and service. The King, noting that Yahn helped “re-energize” Talossa and save her from oblivion in 1991, awarded him the *Për la Nazjun*, the RT’s highest decoration. Gary Swedenborg was sworn in as his successor, and passed the Vote of Confidence, 176 to zero. Swedenborg then shocked everyone by declining to actually join the Progressive Conservative Party, instead remaining a technical “independent.” *“I want people to*

be able to come to me with a glimmer of hope for their weird ideas.” Swedenborg explained. Ben Madison assured people that this was not because of any discontent or rift within the party: “We’re totally united. One solid will.”

7. The transition was marred only by Leftists refusing to attend the “Yahn Resigns” TalossaFest. The King fretted over their moroseness, and warned the next election might see the PC brushing off only the ludicrous Davron in “a boring, chilly campaign.” Lorentz and Murphy openly refused to run for office, but Kovac and Worm stepped in with a **Liberal Party** to preserve the Left’s slim hopes. Davron ran a **War Party**.

8. On 15 May 1994 elections began for the 18th Cosâ, and the lines seemed clearly drawn. The PC ran as the party of activity, Liberals urged an end to the PC “monopoly,” and the War Party opposed “immorality, irresponsibility, and weakness.” June began with the PC expecting to win the election handily. Indeed, the King was so eager to help poor Nik and Andy out, he jaunted off to give ballots to Dan Lorentz and Antonio Riley, who both enthusiastically voted Liberal.

9. Meanwhile a devious deal was struck. Dave Kuenn, who sought help against the PC, called Nik Kovac to talk coalitions. The bored Kovac instead secretly gave Kuenn control of the Liberal Party, with all its votes! The right-wing fecal-obsessed Kuenn forged advertisements from ‘Andrew Worm’ touting the “left-of-centre” Liberals. The PC snoozed, unaware a Liberal media blitz was peppering swing-voters with letters. But two days before the votes were counted, Kuenn sent Madison a note forged (it was later revealed) over the signature of Nik Kovac: “Dave gets the party.” Madison sprang out of bed onto the campaign trail and changed enough minds to avert disaster. Brook Pânetâ voted Liberal but sent his ballot a day late. Had he, Kuenn and Kovac been just a bit more coordinated, the Liberals would have won and Dave Kuenn would have become Prime Minister of Talossa. Turnout surged back to an impressive 19.

10. In the end the PC barely held a majority of 105 seats. The Liberals got 74. Florence Yarney’s protesting **Dan Party**, which urged the destruction of Talossa, won an alarming 21 seats. Turnout surged back from October’s dismal 38% to a very impressive 73%. Swedenborg was re-elected PM but the PC only controlled a tiny majority over a huffing and puffing opposition. *Stotanneu’s* forecast for the rest of 1994 was “thunderstorms.” ●●●

Är Päts, Part Forty-One (June 1994-February 1995)
“Secrets”

“If campaigning for votes is not a public act, I don’t know what is.”

1. In the days following the election, the PC’s micromargin of victory grew into a comfortable lead, thanks again to the Left. Florence Yarney, whose “Dan Party” sought to destroy Talossa, lost heart and handed over her 21 Cosâ seats not to Dan, but to King Robert, her ideological opposite. The King gave some to Lorentz and Prachel, but kept a cushion for the PC. Gary Swedenborg, meanwhile, gave his first Speech to the Nation on 5 July, outlining his goals: curb Davron’s “excessive attitudes,” boost the RT population, and revive a spirit of convivial, participatory partisanship.

2. Opposition Leader Kuenn was also making headlines, with a convoluted and unsuccessful “Momgate” scandal: an attempt to sneak his own mother past the Cort to have her become a citizen, a loyal pocket vote who didn’t have to be lied to to vote for him. But he was unwilling to have the Cort actually meet her, so the plan fizzled.

3. King Robert was vowing not to let Kuenn’s trickery in the election campaign go unpunished. His “Andrew Worm” forgery had still not been presented for public view, a violation of the “You Can Run But You Can’t Hide” law, passed earlier by the Cosâ to let all parties scrutinize each other’s campaign adverts to minimize lies and fraud. Kuenn refused to comply—he handed over a copy with the important parts blacked out—so Madison sued him in the Cort on 30 July.

4. The Cort met at Gay House (picture), a lovely brick French provincial home on Maryland Avenue where the King had house-sat since 1989. The house was a frequent venue for RT get-togethers and TalossaFests. Kuenn’s “Momgate” antics lulled the King into expecting easy victory. Kuenn cited the *Constituziun’s* 7th Covenant, guaranteeing a right to privacy in the mail, subject only to what it called “reasonable” restrictions. So, he argued, he could not be compelled to make his advertisements public. Ben argued that “if campaigning for votes is not a public act, I don’t know what is,” and urged the Cort to uphold this “reasonable” view. The Cort took only minutes to render a unanimous verdict: They ruled that Kuenn’s campaign advertising was indeed a “private” matter, and threw out Ben’s “You Can Run” law as unconstitutional.

5. Yahn’s *TNN* defended Yahn’s Cort decision, largely on the grounds that Ben’s legal presentation had been “boring.” *Stotannen*, of course, ridiculed it; Lorentz blasted the Cort as a “Black Box” which magically produced unjustifiable decisions without regard for “rational arguments” or laws or Talossan tradition. After spending about 24 hours fuming and plotting a rematch in court, Madison decided to fight fire with fire. The Cort ruled that all written documents were “private correspondence.” So, Madison got PM Swedenborg to authorize a referendum in August, to amend the 7th Covenant. And since referendum ballots were written documents, they were “private correspondence,” and he was under no obligation to send any to Davron, or even tell them there was a referendum going on at all!

6. When the votes were counted at the end of August, they unanimously enacted Ben’s position into law. When Kuenn found out in September what had happened, he was predictably, if inconsistently, livid. He threatened to sue the Cort and vowed revenge on everyone who voted “yes” in the “secret” referendum. The Cort told him to put it in writing. He refused, and ranted for weeks while the PC

chortled at him.

7. Meanwhile, the Liberal Party in the Cosâ was evaporating. Secretary of State Yahn received no Clark votes from Liberal MC Ron Rosáis in July or August, and his 24 seats were therefore put up for “by-election” at the behest of a new law. Kuenn claimed Rosáis *had* voted, only Yahn was lying about it. Voters transformed the 24 Liberal seats into 21 PC and 3 Peculiar Way (Lorentz) seats. Kuenn kept whining while *TNN* lampooned his long history of “bungling miscues.”

8. The PC, too, had begun to bungle. PM Swedenborg had dropped out of sight, failing to vote at all on the November Clark. Yahn and Madison blasted him in the press and began to front irreverent Irish speech pathologist John McGarry as a new PM. On the December VOC, Swedenborg was pummeled by a vote of 25 to 130, and while it had no legal significance—the VOC in the last month before elections is cosmetic—it sealed his doom within the PC. *TNN* ran the obligatory Swedenborg-is-a-failure articles; McGarry proclaimed himself the energetic new leader who would “wake up the potential that is Talossa” from slumber and dormancy.

9. Talossans partied on 11 December to celebrate 15 years of Talossan nationhood. The King, now age 29, unveiled his new 48-page *National Atlas of the Kingdom of Talossa*, featuring 69 maps on RT history and geography. He gave an upbeat Speech from the Throne in which he hoisted a mirror behind his head to exclaim, “I’m losing my hair! Is Talossa responsible for this?” Yes, he concluded, but it was worth it because “friendship is worth more than hair.” But the King was not the only star: Dan Lorentz and John Eiffler sank their tons of differences and set up a **Vacillation Party**, the first serious Leftist challenge to the PC for almost two years. The King, as usual, panicked, proclaiming that the revitalized Vacillators would trounce his PC by almost two-to-one.

10. Turnout fell to only 15, but voters went to the polls in February faced with the PC, Vacillation, and Davron’s “Party of Death,” which ended up with 27 seats, or so everyone thought. As usual, it would have been close had the Left shown some competence, but instead the PC ran away with 120 seats, creaming the poor Vacillators who got only 40. Lorentz forgot to vote; Eiffler left his ballot at the wrong house. Buffone was so put off by their bumbling that he ran his own “Anarchist Party” against them and got 13 seats. Arch-Leftist **Melanie Freeman** was swayed by a garish PC “Contract with Melanie” ad campaign. “STUPID TWITS!” cried *TNN*, as the PC gloated; John McGarry was sworn in as Prime Minister on 19 February 1995 with a solid, enthusiastic majority behind him. They wouldn’t be there for long. ●●●

Är Päts, Part Forty-Two (February-December 1995) “Tomorrow the World”

“Ben and I are probably too inept at this stuff to get much accomplished.”

1. John McGarry took office as Prime Minister just in time to witness the end of Dave Kuenn. On 13 February 1995, the Cort convicted Kuenn of violating the “You Can Run But You Can’t Hide” act and tore up his February election ballot. Worse yet, careful analysis showed Kuenn had also forged Andrew Worm’s ballot. Madison and Yahn made strenuous attempts to contact Worm and verify this, but Worm was not to be found.

2. In March the country was momentarily distracted by its King’s turbulent and inexplicable marriage to a Chinese princess named Jenny, and by diplomatic recognition from Hutt River Province, an Australian microstate which sought to sell us stamps. But when the Cosâ got back to business it voted to expel Dave Kuenn for his latest crimes. Kuenn responded by dropping out of politics and, in the spring of 1996, failed to vote in his third consecutive election. Kuenn was officially declared “dead,” thus ending his smarmy and decadent career.

3. Political death, in fact, stalked the Kingdom in 1995. Talossans waited impatiently for McGarry’s mandatory Speech to the Nation, but McGarry alternately quit returning calls and promised the speech was “in the mail.” “Imagine your government being described as ‘Swedenborg Lite,’” *Stotannen* opined, while *TNN* blasted the PM as an “inconsiderate, incommunicado incompetent,” and went on to quote Pushkin. The Vacillation Party also drifted into inactivity: Josh Macht and Sandee Prachel lost most of their 20 Cosâ seats in a May by-election. The King offered the PM-ship to John Eiffler of the Vacillators, but Eiffler was too smart to take it.

4. Since Yahn’s resignation in 1994, the PC had fallen into much the same slump as the Left: an endless casting about for “new blood” to lead the party. First Gary, then McGarry, had failed the test. The latest Great Bearded Hope arrived in May, when Wes Enrici’s old friend **Geoff Tomasüt**, a hairy half-Jewish, half-Palestinian wargamer, applied for citizenship (picture). He was quickly approved, due in part to Senior Justice Yahn of the Uppermost Cort failing to invite Justice Eiffler to Geoff’s formal interview, a fiasco which ended with angry letters in the press and Yahn promising to behave himself next time. “There’s no where to go but up,” the PC’s 50-word statement promised. “Vote PC till we get it right.”

5. With Tomasüt browbeaten into accepting the Tory “invitation” to become PM, the McGarry charade came to an end. In June the Tories unsheathed their daggers and, for the first time ever, consigned their own PM to political outer darkness by voting him out on the Vote of Confidence. Elections began two months early; turnout tumbled to only 11. The Vacillators charged out of the gate; Lorentz drew up complex plans for victory and Eiffler advertised them in *Stotannen*. But they forgot to get on the ballot and had to rely on write-ins. Only Sandee Prachel and Josh Macht voted for them; Lorentz and Eiffler got involved in a Keystone Cops routine involving fax machines and (to make a long story short) didn’t vote. They won only 36 seats compared to 164 for the PC. The PC would have won even more seats, since a new law penalized Josh and Sandee for not voting fast enough! Fortunately, the PC had failed to notify them about the law. To avoid a scandal, John Yahn acted in his authority as a Cort Justice and quietly “injuncted” it out of existence.

6. Geoff Tomasüt was sworn in as Talossa's 23rd PM on 15 September. He quickly addressed the nation—chivalrously not mentioning that McGarry had failed to do so—and put forth his government's main goal: a Talossan computer revolution. While he warned that “Ben and I are probably too inept at this stuff to get much accomplished,” Geoff announced plans for Talossa to establish a presence on the rapidly growing (or as Jurassic Yahn termed it, ‘faddish’) internet:

“If this speech seems to meander and not go anywhere in particular, don’t blame me: the PC did not provide funds for a proper speech-writer. In closing, my administration will endeavour to provide Talossans with that combination of quasi-official and downright weird government that it is their ‘privilege’ to enjoy.”

7. The drive for Talossa to put itself online went back to September 1994, when Dan Lorentz first suggested the idea. The Cosâ urged him to look into the matter, and of course he failed to do so. Backed by Ben Madison and Sandee Prachel, Tomasüt's new initiative grew largely out of Talossa's social doldrums, typified by the cancellation of the 1995 TalossaFest due to lack of interest. Busy with work and school—*Stotannen* and *TNN* had to merge temporarily in September—the country suffered from what Dan termed “adultification syndrome.” The internet seemed to offer Talossa more publicity, as well as a less time-consuming format for its newspapers and government. On 21 October 1995, the RT officially went “online” with its own email address (actually the King's, at talossa@execpc.com) and began advertising itself on Usenet newsgroups.

8. Joyous Talossans celebrated the RT's anniversary party on 9 December 1995. Cort and Cosâ approved three new citizens: **Brendan Duddy**, **Matthias Muth**, and **Nathan Freeburg**, all Marquette University grad students (hence their collective nickname: “Mugrads”). The trio rapidly unveiled a right-wingish **Clockwork Orange Party** (COP) complete with by-laws, armbands, and boundless energy that startled the PC and washed away any lingering talk of an apathy threat to the Kingdom in the near future. Mugrads soon took control of Mussolini Province and Brendan Duddy supplanted the inert Wes Enrici as Secretary of State.

9. Conversation turned back to a favourite Talossan obsession: national identity. Talossa's internet foray began poorly. For months there was no response to the RT's meagre newsgroup adverts. This suited some, like John Yahn, just fine. Massive immigration by faceless, unverifiable people worried many Talossans, and in December 1995, the Cosâ voted to restore the defunct Senäts, the King-appointed upper house of Parliament, to give Old Growth Talossans living in and around the Kingdom the upper hand just in case. But the lack of response lulled Talossans into thinking their internet experiment had failed. Nobody expected the roller-coaster ride that was to follow. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Forty-Three (January-April 1996)
“http://my.execpc.com/~talossa”

“...arrogant attitudes...”

1. The country’s traditional paranoia about “national identity” was out in full force in early 1996, as Madison, Yahn, and even Dan Lorentz—active once again in the press for the first time since 1990—wrote feverish editorials in the country’s internet debate. Yahn let it be known he despised computers and all they stood for, including potential “Cybercits.” Talk of new faces in far places put Yahn on edge—he even proposed a bill banning them from the country, which failed miserably.

2. On 15 January 1996 the country launched its official home page on the World Wide Web. It received a handful of lukewarm responses, most asking about the Talossan language. By the end of the month Yahn gave his grumbling blessing to a new citizenship law applying stringent requirements for all potential Cybercits, and as it turned out, it was just in time.

3. In February, King Robert unveiled the 2nd edition of the *Scúrznjá*, the Talossan language grammar, featuring revised spellings and simplified grammar. It was the language that attracted a 14-year-old Esperantist from Virginia, **Chris Collins**, who applied for citizenship that month as the country’s first Cybercit, whom the RT would have to admit without a face-to-face meeting. As Talossans wondered if Talossa would colonize the internet or if the internet would colonize Talossa, the folks at Netscape added Talossa’s home page to their list of the world’s most interesting web sites. Suddenly Talossa was the focus of worldwide publicity, including an article in the *Montréal Gazette*. The King was deluged with email; in the next month, more than 25,000 people visited the home page—and more than 2,000 of them sought information on citizenship in Talossa (population: 30)!

4. Nearly all were put off by the country’s byzantine immigration laws, requiring book purchases and a Cort interview. But by the time the delirium ended in March, there were five serious applications: **Sean Hjorth**, a curmudgeonly, conservative hacker; **Marc-André Dowd**, a Québec separatist; **Gjermund Higrapp**, a Norwegian leftist; **Alberto Manassero**, a right-wing Italian political operative; and **Ken Velméir**, head of the Chamber of Commerce in Fremont, California. Oddly, the first six Cybercits (including Collins) came to be known as the “Mercury 7.”

5. The Cybercit surge led to profound changes. On 10 April 1996, *Stotanneu* abandoned ten years as a photocopied newspaper and went over to an online format. The handful of active citizens not on the Internet (admittedly a crucial handful, including the whole Uppermost Cort: Yahn, Enrici and Eiffler) were suddenly at a disadvantage and were often shut out of the information loop. For weeks, till Ben figured out his printing software, Old Growthers had to rely on ugly HTML printouts of his paper (“Støtanneu”) rather than the gorgeous version they were used to. No one reacted to the new order with more vehemence than Yahn, self-proclaimed fan of manual typewriters, who snarled for months about the “arrogant attitudes” of internet-addicted Talossans while blasting the whole thing as a cold and smarmy distraction from “real” personal interaction. He missed the whole point that Talossa had embraced the internet precisely because of the downturn in personal interaction among the country’s traditional East Side core.

6. Soon Velméir, Higrapp and Dowd had formed their own “new left” party, **els Zefençadéirs del Päts**

Talossán (ZPT: “Defenders of the Land of Talossa,” in Talossan) and set up an online paper, *L’Avintguárd*, just in time to cover the country’s national elections that they couldn’t vote in yet. PM Tomasüt’s unexpectedly brilliant first term ended and elections began in March. Lorentz ran a pro-internet **Third Wave Party** (3WP) that gathered no attention. Soilitarians Eiffler and Prachel fielded their Vacillation Party while the PC licked the gooey caramel centre.

7. Nathan Freeburg’s right-wing COP proved to be the most active party. Pretending to be left-wing and reaching out to the ZPT, Freeburg managed to forge a “United Front” of all the non-PC parties, in a grand anti-Tory alliance to make Freeburg Prime Minister. The COP campaigned hard and nearly ended the PC’s three-year reign. Bizarrely, it all fell apart when Freeburg tried to reinflate Davron and bring them back to RT politics as COP voters. Not only did Freeburg fail, but he blamed the attempt on a friend who wasn’t even a citizen. His antics, and the mere whiff of Davron in the air, stained the COP’s reputation just enough to send swing-voter Gary Swedenborg scurrying back to his second choice, the PC. Stunningly, even Tom Buffone voted PC, for the first time since 1989, after hearing of Freeburg’s attempted necrophilic acts with the dying Davron.

8. Things got even sillier when Freeburg secretly proposed to the King that Cybercits be banned from holding the office of Prime Minister. *Stotanneu* revealed this latest plot, and the “United Front” collapsed at once. Freeburg’s party were condemned as right-wing extremists but they expelled him from the party; it split into three chunks. He denounced the new COP leader, Matthias Muth, as a “fascist,” and warned that the COP sought to “wreck Talossa” for fun. This was followed by more *grand guignol* scandals, such as Brendan Duddy stealing a letter that Muth had signed, which implied that Muth too had quit the COP, thus leaving the party with no members. All this left the COP the laughing-stock of the country, a fitting heir to Davron. Muth, miffed, set about quietly rebuilding its fortunes.

9. Uncertainty over the massive Cybercit influx and revulsion at what Muth called the COP’s “nathantics” drove turnout up to 17 and led to an election made in heaven for the gloating PC. On 14 April they secured a massive win in the face of credible and incredible opposition parties, capturing 118 Cosâ seats, to the 3WP’s 12 and 35 each for the COP and Vacillators. Swedenborg, surveying the damage, said the Tories deserved to win since they were “a steady hand” guiding the country through uncharted cyberspace. But whether Prime Minister Geoff Tomasüt, or anyone, could really handle the country’s unprecedented growth remained to be seen. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Forty-Four (April-December 1996)
“Amish, Nazis, and Pocket Votes”

“[We want to] legislate life and rule it... How can you help us rule?”

1. During 1996, more people joined Talossa than in the ten previous years combined. Not only did this generate a vast amount of news, but it meant that *Ár Päts* could no longer name every new immigrant except when they did ‘important’ things.

2. Ken Velméir’s ZPT, whose members weren’t citizens yet, asked all parties for a few Cosâ seats so they could join political life. To their shock, the Opposition refused to part with a single seat, so the PC was left to hand one over to each ZPT member. The King named Velméir, the most active Opposition figure, and publisher of *L’Avântguárd*, to serve as Opposition Leader. Old Growth Leftist Sandee Prachel called it “a definite chess move to factionalize the Left,” while Lorentz ranted about it being “an attempt by the King to make Talossa into a one party state”! Apparently the ZPT was not sufficiently insane; the Left wrote them off as PC collaborators. The King finally yanked Velméir’s nomination in the face of left-wing blandishments. Lorentz then flip-flopped and joined the ZPT.

3. Not that the Government was any more united. On 8 May, cybercritics Yahn and Nathan Freeburg teamed up to create a “Talossa For Talossans Front” (TFTF) that warned “it’s all over” for Talossa if Cybercits were allowed equal rights; Yahn warned that they would somehow impede TalossaFests or other local RT social functions. He blasted Cybercits, and the King, for their “seemingly unbridled arrogance” for using the term “snail-mail.” Chris Collins laughed at the non-Cybers, calling them “Amish,” but the ZPT reacted with horror, calling the TFTF “Nazis” for discriminating against legitimate Talossans, and warning Yahn might try exterminating the Cybercits. Madison as always positioned himself in the middle, denouncing Yahn for pinning “little yellow computers” on their coats but criticizing the “rampant paranoia at both extremes.”

4. PM Tomasüt saw Yahn’s antics as a direct affront to his government, in which Yahn held several portfolios. He suspended Yahn from his posts on 13 May. Yahn responded by moderating and booted Freeburg out of his own TFTF. At PC HQ, Yahn and Madison hammered out a set of vague compromises and Yahn was restored to office, but he was soon attacking Ben’s *Berber Project*, a 50-page ‘scholarly’ defence of the idea that ancient Berbers settled Talossa. Like a decade earlier, Yahn blasted this “bald-faced Berber balderdash.” Yahn soon wrote a triumphalist history of the old TNP, plotted with the COP’s Matthias Muth to oppose Madison and Tomasüt on Cybercits and Berbers, and even encouraged Muth’s abortive scheme to toss Justice Wes Enrici off the Uppermost Cort so Muth could attain his life’s ambition: a seat on the Cort.

5. Meanwhile, Madison and Yahn were both fed up with Geoff Tomasüt for having done little since his April re-election (beyond reacting to Yahn crises). But this changed when they began hunting for a new PM. Geoff’s long speech on 17 July blasted Yahn’s glib dismissal of the *Berber Project*, and he expressed his outrage that Yahn, Culture Minister in a PC cabinet, was thwarting the King’s efforts to promote RT culture. He even asked Yahn to quit the PC. *Stotannen* reported it, and the ZPT took advantage, painting Tomasüt falsely as “Ben’s puppet” and attacking Ben personally in an effort to prove itself to the Left. All this convinced the Tories that whatever else, they really did want to win. Their emergency party séance of 23 July 1996 was, as *L’Avântguárd* proclaimed, a “love-fest.” Yahn, who found he

couldn't trust the opposition any more than he could the PC, returned to the fold. "It's much more fun to crush the opposition," Tomasüt declared.

6. On 17 August ten Talossans gathered for TalossaFest and a Living Cosâ, including Secretary of State Sean Hjorth, who drove more than 300 miles to join the festivities. Velméir participated by phone from California; the social wall between Cybercits and Old Growth Talossans seemed to fade away, and everyone felt positive. Talossa soon welcomed its first Cybercit from Australia, graphics whiz **Evan Gallagher**, who quickly made all the right friends and rose to become Secretary of State (SoS) in an amazingly short time. Gallagher admitted publicly that he was motivated by "raw Machiavellianism," but no one realized: a new Davron had entered the fold.

7. In an effort to culturally assimilate the new Cybercits, in September 1996 Ben published *Front Page Talossa*, a 55-page history of Talossa told using illustrations of the country's long history of 'real' newspapers like *Stotannen* and *TNN*.

8. But the positive spirit faded rapidly that month when a committee led by Matthias Muth began modestly rewriting the 1988 *Constituziun* in light of the country's recent changes. The ZPT denounced every minor change backed by the PC (or the status quo, if the PC endorsed that) as a plot to "give Ben more power." Nathan Freeburg used the occasion to demand the PC form a coalition with his COP, proclaiming himself an "authoritarian conservative" seeking to "legislate life and rule it! How can you help us rule?" Tomasüt laughed him off and a firestorm of bad press forced Freeburg to quit Talossa (temporarily). COP member Brendan Duddy quit for good.

9. In November the RT began its first election in Cyberspace, run by Gallagher. The whole Opposition blasted the King's sister and other less active Talossans as "PC pocket votes," urging their removal from Talossa for the crime of "inactivity" in a letter written by Muth which Ben called "almost racist." Tom Buffone called the PC "the only liberal party left in Talossa" and called the letter's ZPT co-signatories "Nazis" for discriminating against real Talossans. Velméir then flip-flopped and vowed to pack Talossa with his own pocket votes recruited to "give the ZPT the votes it needs" to win future elections. In the resulting furor, Velméir quit as head of the ZPT; the untried Old Growther **Márcüs Pitz** became ZPT leader (and hosted the Anniversary Party – see picture) but not in time to rescue the Opposition's sizzling chestnuts. With turnout surging to 27, the PC was re-elected on 14 December 1996 with 56% of the vote over five frustrated minor parties. Geoff Tomasüt became the first PM to win three successive mandates, thanks to voter backlash over the "pocket votes letter." The COP had blown its second election in a row. ●●●

Är Päts, Part Forty-Five (January-August 1997) “Injurious Imputations”

“What the hell is going on?”

1. Votes were barely counted when Vacillation Party ineptitude sparked a constitutional crisis. Having left all its Cosâ seats vacant (!), the party headed for a huge by-election, and the PC expected to win the lion’s share of seats. But SoS Evan Gallagher announced that by-elections were somehow ‘unfair’: so he simply refused to hold them. Heated exchanges with PM Tomasüt followed. Finally the King “pardoned” the Vacillators, who took their seats, but Talossans were floored by Gallagher’s self-righteous contempt for the law, which set a dangerous precedent for the Secretary of State taking the law into his own hands.

2. Meanwhile the chagrined COP merged with Gallagher’s Whigs to form the “Silver Phoenix Party” (SPP), insisting that it—not the PC—represented the “balanced centre.” To the PC (which reviled the SPP as the “Fabulous Thunderbirds”), SPP ideas like abolishing PDs and the veto were “extremist,” and the SPP was hiding its “real right-wing agenda.” Calling the SPP a “party of prevaricators,” *Stotannen* likened it to Davron’s 1994 “Liberal Party” scam, claiming Gallagher had misled the Cosâ in his 1996 application for citizenship. So in March, 1997, Gallagher fired a landmark “libel suit” at *Stotannen* in the Cort, charging Ben with “injurious imputations.”

3. The Cort itself had changed. Justice Enrici retired, to Justice Eiffler’s dismay; Yahn sneered, “Don’t let the door hit you on the way out.” The King chose Tomasüt over Muth to replace Enrici, but public outrage at the idea of Geoff being both PM and Cort Justice forced the PC into a “leadership campaign” to pick a new PM. The candidates (Yahn, Alberto Manassero, and **Dale Morris**, a teenage Texan Talossan language enthusiast) made a convoluted deal, and as Geoff joined the Cort, Manassero was sworn in as interim PM on 6 March.

4. The libel suit that Eiffler dubbed “the O.J. Trial” rattled on for weeks. Madison hurled barbs and subpoenas, mainly at the Cort, blaming Gallagher for “censorship.” PM Manassero vowed to defend free speech “even on the sex of angels.” The SPP’s **J.P. Griffin**, a highly volatile right-wing friend of Muth’s, savagely attacked Ben online and even threatened to bomb Ben’s email account with thousands of spam messages, to shut down his access to email. But when Griffin vowed to recruit “College Republicans” to bolster a rightist seizure of Talossa, SPP members scurried for cover. Gallagher abandoned the party and his lawsuit, his reputation in rubble.

5. PM Manassero retired on 22 April to move “to Venezia—no, not the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia.” Deputy PM Dale Morris (picture) took over at once and appointed John Yahn to head an “immigration commission” (his part of the PC leadership deal). Talossans backed the PC’s vague immigration policies, but debated how large the country should grow.

6. The issue was sidetracked when Madison announced a reform package called the “Real Cosâ,” which became the keystone of the “Organic Law,” designed to replace the clunky 1988 *Constituziun*. A committee led by Muth had been writing it for nine months. It would turn what some called the “D&D Talossa” system of a 200-seat ‘fake’ Cosâ into a ‘real’ Cosâ of 20 elected people—plus an elected Senâts with one Senator from each of the seven Provinces. Remarkable consensus on these issues helped

convince both Muth and Gallagher to join the PC! PC leader Yahn was ecstatic; he'd tried to win fellow-conservative Muth over for months. PM Morris stunned the RT by naming Gallagher Deputy PM; the switcheroo left the Opposition dizzy and demoralized. "What the hell is going on?" lamented ZPT leader Márcüs Pitz.

7. PC bragging didn't last long. In April the Cosâ approved a ZPT bill to oust Gloria Estefan as "National Entertainer," a status held since 1991 thanks to then-PM Wes Enrici's unhealthy fixation. Yahn provided the crucial vote; Enrici quit the PC. The PC's **Ryan Hughes** bolted to the ZPT after setting up an online "Discussion Group" that helped them air their attacks on Madison and Yahn, but the PC learned to hold its own in the new forum. Tempers flared when Griffin joined the ZPT and registered the domain name of "Talossa.com" without Talossa's consent; Morris formed a committee to study it. And online Talossans fought the "Great Bug Nations War" against a consortium of pesky spam-flinging online Talossa-clones egged on by a pseudonymous Brazilian teenager obsessed with getting Talossa to 'recognize' them.

8. Voters approved the OrgLaw by a giddy 94% majority in a July referendum, but controversy soon followed when the Cort forced two provinces to elect their own Senators after local voters failed to do so. The decision seemed to violate the OrgLaw's provincial autonomy rules—so SoS Gallagher simply refused to hold the elections. An agitated Cort caved in in the face of "Evan's Rebellion," but all around Talossa people began to turn against "above the law Evan," including Ben, who had thanklessly backed his actions.

9. Meanwhile Talossa's election lumbered on pointlessly with the parties taking potshots on Ryan Hughes' 'Disco Group.' Hughes had a policy of letting citizens post personal attacks anonymously. When *Stotanneu* complained, Hughes plunged the RT into darkness on 2 August by shutting down the Group. Pitz and the ZPT went postal with an email flame war calling Madison "a bastard, a nut, and an asshole." Morris politely asked Hughes to put the Group back up.

10. Pitz looked unstable while Morris looked 'presidential'; voters reacted accordingly. On 14 August 1997 Morris' PC captured 12 of 20 Cosâ seats and 5 of 6 contested Senatorships. The ZPT took 6 Cosâ seats; minor parties got 2. Turnout was flat at 27; Sandee Prachel and Josh Macht, co-heads of the incalculable Vacillators, were busy getting married and didn't vote. Vacillator Eiffler, furious at Madison for not 'making' him vote, quit politics (again). He was soon followed into retirement by Geoff Tomasüt, who was tired of colliding with Gallagher over legal issues. The King had two Cort vacancies to fill, putting the intricate new OrgLaw to an unexpected test. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Forty-Six (August 1997-March 1998)
“Talossa’s Vietnam”

“Some suburb of Milwaukee that we’ll probably never go to.”

1. After weeks of Hamlet-like soliloquies, King Robert named Matthias Muth and Tom Buffone to the Cort vacancies on 31 August 1997. But his decision to appoint Muth over the jealous runner-up, Evan Gallagher, lit a long, long fuse.

2. Gallagher was Governor of Pengöpäts, the RT’s flimsy claim to a chunk of Antarctica, which had lately become a symbol for a Cybercit clique he had set up, known alluringly as “cultural democracy.” Their plans were foggy, but they warned that if their “true intentions” became public, Ben would (somehow) throw them out of Talossa. Gallagher declared the Talossan language “boring” and concocted a rival “language” and “culture” in Pengöpäts, complete with imaginary friends as “natives.” Stridently calling all his critics “fascists,” he calculated that with Tomasüt, Enrici, and Eiffler gone, and Yahn not on the ’net, the “Old Growth” was headed for the saw mill: and it was his turn to be Talossa’s next Ben Madison. And if he failed, he would wreck Talossa.

3. In the inevitable mêlée, Gallagher’s plans to dictate every line of RT law and culture were easily out-argued. Like mad old Dobberpuhl, he chose to quit the RT, but with a twist: he’d secretly use Talossa as a recruiting office for his own micronation. Prospective citizen **Anthony (‘Daphne’) Lawless**, a dope-smoking transsexual “anarchist witch” from New Zealand, joined him in a laughable ‘suicide pact’ to set up a ‘we-hate-Talossa-club’ along with perennial misfit Ryan Hughes. Eager to provoke some reaction that would “force” them to quit Talossa, they cranked up the rhetoric. Lawless called his putative Talossan homeland “fake; some suburb of Milwaukee that we’ll probably never go to.” The Cort only managed a 3-way tie on Lawless’ citizenship in September, but it was enough. On cue, the shocked (*shocked!*) trio declared themselves victims of RT “lies and hatred” and stormed out. **Charles Sauls** took over as SoS after first siding with the traitors. The King wrote off Evan and his self-proclaimed “Penguineans” as “Transdavronian” and hoped Talossa had finally heard the last of them.

4. The losses barely notched the graph as the Ziu (Cosâ and Senäts) approved new citizens from far-off Cyprus and Brazil. The Old Growth made a startling comeback as Buffone, Swedenborg, and Yahn—yes, *that* Yahn—got on the ’net. The end of the Cyber/Amish issue turned Talossa into a hotbed of social rest, disturbed only by angry threats by permanent troublemaker J.P. Griffin to sell his “Talossa” web domain to a porn site. Others put time into the Talossan language and took Talossan names, like **Tomás Gariçéir**, who joined CÜG, set up a website in fluent Talossan and learned to speak the language. The RT had rejected the cultural phoniness *TNN* called “hare-brained Gallagherism,” and could turn its eyes back to domestic issues like the Catholic extremism of Canadian teen newbie **Márcüs Cantaloûr**, who later came out as Gay and moderated greatly.

5. On 6 December 1997 the fabled **Gary Conâ**—who came ‘home’ to join Talossa—hosted the RT’s annual fête of sovereignty (picture). Present were a revived Wes Enrici, who rejoined the PC and got his job back as Governor of Pengöpäts; and John Eiffler, who replaced the decadent Dan Lorentz as Senator from Florencia. 16 new citizens joined in 1997, and King Robert—now 32—quoted one in his Throne Speech: “*Talossa has passed the test of adulthood. It cannot be outgrown. Even governments officially committed to apathy cannot destroy it.*” He was pelted with Nerf balls amid peals of laughter. Tomás Gariçéir made the

baxb (‘pilgrimage’) from Scotland, Talossans began videotaping a documentary on Talossa, and silly Brook Pànetà had his citizenship restored.

6. All the joy and success grated on Gallagher’s “Penguinea” cult. On the RT’s birthday, they hit Wittenberg (the RT’s new disco group) with a barrage of posts calling Talossa “corrupt and quasi-fascist,” and sent anti-Talossan spam to prospective citizens. *Stotanneu* beat the war drums, calling it “Talossa’s Vietnam”; but as the harassment intensified, the voice heard least often was PM Dale Morris, who had come—in typical Tory fashion—to rely on Yahn and Madison to run the country. So on 19 January 1998 the PC leaped over a whole generation to pick middle-aged, flaky San Francisco professor **Dan Wardlow** to carry the torch—the fourth PM in 11 months.

7. The insecure, authoritarian Wardlow proved to be one of the worst catastrophes in RT history. Soon after taking office, he opened secret “peace talks” with the traitors. “Make sure none of this gets back to Talossa,” he emailed them in a letter later leaked back to Talossa. With the King’s blessing, Wardlow began open negotiations, but had no idea how to negotiate. The resulting vague, rhetorical “peace treaty” only emboldened the splitters, who widened their campaign of intimidation. When Madison suggested that both sides pledge not to “poach” the other’s citizens, Wardlow hysterically and boisterously refused to include specifics: it was his treaty, and Ben was “an obstacle to peace” and a “Stalinist” for butting in. Despite all this, the King assured the PM that he would sign the “peace treaty” into law if asked to.

8. Ben offered to quit the PC, revive the “Black Hand” as his own xenophobic fringe party, and let Wardlow run the country since they agreed on most other issues. But Wardlow could not allow any dissent; he split off, joining Márcüs Pitz in a new left-wing “Peace and Freedom Party” named by ‘Daphne’ Lawless! Its actual agenda was only clear in private: Wardlow ranted behind his supporters’ backs about his thirst to “marginalize Ben” and ordered disobedient Talossans to “suck my dick.” “Gallagher is calling the shots in this government,” Ben warned.

9. While staking his reputation on “peace” with the Talossa-haters, Wardlow refused to PD his treaty into law, despite requests from that “obstacle to peace,” the King. Talossans grew ever more mystified by Wardlow’s erratic conduct and mad monologues. Finally, before the election could even begin on 15 March 1998, Wardlow renounced his citizenship, leaving his devotees fuming at Ben for somehow “making” him go. ●●●

Är Päts, Part Forty-Seven (March-December 1998)
“The Big Dabrowski”

“...vicious, sycophantic, homophobic thug.”

1. The rest of 1998 was dominated by the frustrating issue of “bug nations.” It began with the crowning absurdity of the Wardlow era taking place as soon as he quit: the new PM was the morbidly indecisive, easily traumatized Charles Sauls—who was now calling himself a “dual citizen” of Talossa and “Penguinea.” In one of the most sadistic exploits ever perpetrated against a Talossan, the quitters threatened Sauls that unless he left Talossa to join their bug nation, they would cut off their “friendships” with him. So Sauls defected, after swearing, in tears, that he would never do any such thing.

2. With the Government constitutionally unable to function thanks to defections in the ruling PFPT, the normally inactive King Robert I launched a “coup” on 29 March 1998 and plopped **Christopher C. Gruber**, the PC’s candidate, behind the PM’s desk even before the votes were counted. The new PFPT chief, Márcüs Pitz, presciently focused on Gruber’s Gay-bashing as unbecoming of a Talossan PM. Still, the Tories crushed everything in their path, winning a whopping 25 votes to the PFPT’s 11. The purely ’net-based PFPT had refused to campaign among off-line Talossans and blew up into five chunks as soon as the election was over, blowing an exasperated John Eiffler off the Opposition benches and back into the eager arms of the PC.

3. The country’s welcome for Gruber—a shadowy character from Florida who’d been a citizen only six weeks—was not shared among the traitors, who denounced him, with unappreciated prescience, as a “vicious, sycophantic, homophobic thug.” Gruber responded by doing what Wardlow and Sauls had refused: he signed the proposed Peace Treaty! If that shocked most Talossans, so did Gallagher’s refusal to sign his own treaty; he kept heaping denunciations on Talossa and “King Bobby.” After six weeks of this, Penguinea’s “Lord Protector” finally signed it in a legalistic manoeuvre of no significance, declaring that it only bound him personally, while his three trained seals carried on their campaign of yelping and barking. A few weeks later they “repealed” the Treaty, a signed copy of which Gruber, establishing a reputation as a bungler, managed to lose. Most Talossans were sick of the whole debate and learned to ignore these sociopathic adolescents who found meaning for their lives in badmouthing Talossan success.

4. In May, Márcüs Pitz fired off domestic fireworks in the form of angry outbursts about PC “illegality” and “corruption.” Refusing to take a Cosâ seat, Pitz noted that the Tories had won so many seats, they had to give a couple to PC members who were already in the Senäts—which the Organic Law allowed them to do. But Pitz claimed this was all part of a vast right-wing conspiracy to “exclude” inactive off-line citizens from the Cosâ, despite the fact that 100% of these off-liners had just voted PC. Mostly unmoved by such antics, the Opposition began to reform under the old ZPT banner and chose Ken Velmêir as its new leader—a wiser, more moderate Velmêir, who outshone all other oppositionists in his outrage at the traitorous quitters. The King was impressed enough to nominate Velmêir to fill the Cort vacancy that opened up when the Ziu ousted the inactive Tom Buffone. Velmêir would hold the seat for seven years.

5. Despite the 1997 “Bug Nations War” and the tiring experience with the traitors, some still believed

that Talossa could somehow “influence” the cloud of gnat-like “bug nations” springing up online in plagiaristic imitation of Talossa. In July PM Gruber convinced the Ziu to establish “diplomatic relations” with several such groups, leading to loud debate about RT national identity in which the King’s nationalistic xenophobia was momentarily eclipsed. This openness to copycat groups was tempered by the Ziu’s prohibition of “dual citizenships.”

6. TalossaFest ’98, held on Saturday, 1 August (picture), showed how un-buglike Talossa was. 20 Talossans and guests attended from as far away as Sweden and Massachusetts, in Ben’s backyard or over the phone. The Living Cosâ, only the second of the “Cybercit” era, was marred as a united Opposition voted down the citizenship of teenage prospective **Matt Dabrowski**—the first refusal in 18 years of anyone who really wanted to join Talossa. The ZPT claimed Matt had a short temper, and had been in two “bug nations” before deciding to join the RT. But Dabrowski, as hot-tempered as Pitz and many other RT loominaries, had (unwisely) declared himself a possible PC voter, so the ZPT’s J.P. Griffin led the charge to have him defeated.

7. Griffin, hiding behind the country’s secret vote on citizens, blamed the defeat on two PC defectors, and the PC couldn’t deny the charges because the citizenship vote was sealed! *Stotanneu* claimed Matt was voted down to keep him from voting in the election, which the King called “disgusting.” Many of Matt’s critics reversed their votes after seeing what they had done.

8. The PC nearly collapsed over what *TNN* dubbed “Mattgate.” PC Leader Yahn defended two Tory senators who broke with him to vote Matt down. Madison was furious, claiming the PC stood for nothing but its own power. He negotiated with a host of people, including Velméir and the mercurial, incomprehensible Quebecker **Maxime Charbonneau**, looking for an electable alternative to the Tories. After no one fell for his strident ‘Dabrowski Yes, Bugs No’ programme, Madison went back to the PC as a muted voice. Exhausted by the fight, he gave up editorship of *Stotanneu* to Chris Gruber, who quickly ran the paper into the ground. For the first time in RT history the King now had no official voice, and Talossa had no newspaper.

9. Madison’s choice to stick with the Tories—in exchange for a vague promise of “citizenship reform” from the party establishment—meant the campaign that followed was relatively bland and lacking in themes. Turnout was amazing: 42 voters. Unexpected PC votes kept the ZPT and a surging new Liberal Party from taking control of the Cosâ on 14 December 1998. Gruber and the PC were back in office, but with a majority of only one seat. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Forty-Eight (December 1998-August 1999) “No More Bugs!”

“People with titles and nothing else, fans of D&D and more stupidity.”

1. PM Chris Gruber’s PC government strode confidently back into office, despite its narrow majority. No screwy foreign plots had disrupted the vote this time, and the government rallied to undo what it saw as the mistakes of 1998. One of these was that year’s dismal citizenship record. Compared with 1997’s 16 new citizens, 1998 saw only seven, which many blamed on PFPT-sponsored infighting and the country’s byzantine immigration laws. Madison laid down a radical “decoupling act” to make citizenship law amendable by a majority vote of the Ziu rather than cumbersome OrgLaw amendments. All were stunned when the bill failed: blocked by the ZPT in the Senäts, where the PC was rapidly losing its majority through the disappearance of Sean Hjorth, the loss of the Florencia seat to Maxime Charbonneau, and the defection to the ZPT of Maricopa Senator Gary Swedenborg, still fighting vainly to keep Matt Dabrowski out of Talossa.

2. But the Tories quickly showed their mettle once again. The Ziu voted Dabrowski in as a citizen with the full backing of the PC, and after some concerted sweet talk, Ben won ZPT support for his “decoupling act” on citizenship reform. The PC acted quickly to abolish the “secret vote” on incoming citizens. Bewilderingly this was a controversial move; one ZPT MC declared that he would refuse to vote on any citizens till the “secret vote” was restored, while OpLeader **Jay Shorten**, the mega-Catholic new head of the Liberal Party, ridiculed the PC for thinking voters actually had a right to know what their elected representatives were up to.

3. Matt Dabrowski became, as everyone expected, a meteoric flash in the RT firmament. Installed as Premier of Vuode after a snap election there backed by the King, Matt was granted a Cosâ seat by the PC and horrified everyone by proposing literally scores of bills, denouncing “fascist” Wal-Mart and praising Slovenia as a beacon of democracy. Matt’s shining moment came in January as he helped drive away one pugnacious prospective who had been ferrying internal RT memos to the country’s self-proclaimed “Penguinian” enemies abroad.

4. Dabrowski was just as active in his other post, as the RT’s “Ambassador” to a pact of online “micronations,” most of whom were nothing more than dead links on the organization’s website. But Matt’s jockeying for power within the group led to flame-wars with micro-nerds whom Senator Charbonneau called “people with titles and nothing else, fans of D&D and more stupidity.” The controversy sapped what little enthusiasm the PC had for “bug nations” and their U.N.-esque antics, and in March Gruber issued a well-intentioned but bone-headed PD cutting off all Talossan “diplomatic contact” with the swarms of online Talossa-clones, but keeping Dabrowski as envoy to the online micros’ group. The extremely unpopular PD was widely seen as having been engineered by Dabrowski. The ZPT’s Ken Velméir (picture, top left, with Madison and Conâ at TalossaFest 1999) denounced it for its “disdain for the political process” since it preempted several bills on that month’s Clark. The King finally vetoed the PD and the Ziu went along with the ZPT’s moderate if somewhat disingenuous alternative, which cut off “official” contact with the “bugs” while encouraging “informal” contact with them, even with ones that were openly bashing Talossa. On 21 March the King grudgingly signed this “Semi-Permeable Wall Act,” finally ending the RT’s relationships with cretinous copycats.

5. Gruber's long periods of inactivity (like forgetting to vote on the Clark) and the "bug nations" flap led PC insiders to prod him to make good on his promise to resign after a year in office (though Ben's "For the love of God, go!" was a bit over the top). Gruber's resignation was delayed by a not totally frivolous lawsuit relating to some trivial appointments which he had put off for months; but when he finally did resign in May, the torch was passed effortlessly to the radically conservative *Distáin* (Deputy PM) **Michael Pope**, best known for opposing Talossa's recent declaration of war on genocidal, Marxist Serbia because Serbia's enemy was Bill Clinton.

6. The most un-Talossan thing about all these events was that they weren't reported in any newspaper. The biggest social change in the country during this period was the disappearance of "the press" as an institution. The culprit was Wittenberg, Talossa's online discussion group, which meant communication was no longer monopolized by those with the time and money to put out a paper, even an online one. *TNN* had folded in 1998, and an effort by Ben Madison to resuscitate *Stotannen* in January in an online format died from lack of interest. A alliance of concerned Talossans succeeded, in August of 1999, in reviving the old, snail-mail *Stotannen*, but it only lasted one issue; public apathy and the World Wide Web won out in the end.

7. The parties were also gearing up for a crucial election. The PC regained its Senäts majority when ex-Tory Tomás Gariçéir rejoined the PC, as the voter roll continued to swell, reaching 59 by the time elections began in July. Both Frédéric Coriü and Andrew Worm had rediscovered Talossa online and had their Talossanity restored by the Uppermost Cort; an additional eight new citizens had also been voted in since January.

8. The election was the ugliest Talossa had seen in years. The ZPT angrily charged the ruling PC with "pushing" to limit Talossans' freedoms, a charge stemming only from the PC's bad attitude about ZPT members fraternizing with Talossa-hating "bugs." Jay Shorten's Liberals claimed that Gruber's resignation was actually some sort of lame PC plot to dupe the voters. The beneficiary of the escalating flame war was the charming and entertaining *Raßemblamáintsch dels Citaxbiëns Talossáes* (RCT), formed earlier by Charbonneau but which now began to pick up mainstream supporters bored by yet another PC majority and turned off by ZPT/Liberal saturnalia.

9. Despite vigorous coalition talks between the PC, RCT, and even the ZPT, the voters shocked everyone on 14 August 1999 by handing the PC a majority of 11 of 20 seats, thanks in part to a highly improbable die roll which gave them the 11th seat. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Forty-Nine (August 1999-April 2000)
“Mr Anglemark, Tear Down This Wall!”

“...the rape of our last innocence...”

1. In the waning days of the August 1999 election, the PC and Ken Velméir’s ZPT put out feelers over a possible coalition which, till the last day of the vote, was a live option. As it turned out, the ZPT returned to the Opposition as the largest party on that side of the aisle. The ZPT fielded the controversial but talented J.P. Griffin as its candidate for Opposition Leader. The strident Liberal Party, headed by the clever **Dan Rogerson** following the ignominious resignation of the gladiatorial Jay Shorten, teamed up with the RCT, the Cosâ’s smallest party, to block Griffin’s nomination; Canadian-Talossan **Daviu Foctéir**, head of the RCT, was made Opposition Leader. The furious ZPT drew closer still to the ruling PC.

2. Michael Pope’s PC team took power with renewed confidence. But with tempers still hot following the campaign, he declared a month of recess; the new Cosâ was not seated until 1 October 1999. Pope put together a cabinet including the Liberals’ **Johan Anglemark** as Minister for Micronational Affairs, to deal with the swarms of gnat-like “bug nations” that continued to pester and harass Talossans. Anglemark’s bipartisan appointment was debatable given his ties to the “Penguineans,” and his unapologetic participation in “bug nation” forums where Talossans were routinely attacked. Anglemark, who even called Talossa a “hate cult” over some citizens’ refusal to ignore foreign slights, soon drew fire over his perceived softball responses to unending foreign attacks. What followed was a spectacular personal blow-up on Wittenberg.

3. Anglemark complained that bugs were having their posts deleted on Wittenberg (true enough!) and his answer was to invent a rival BBS, vowing to delete anything the Libs called “personal attacks” or “partisan politics.” The move was viewed as a clumsy power-play for the votes of people like the embittered Gary Swedenborg, who had broken with the Tories after the Matt Dabrowski fiasco and descended into a silent, scowling, Ben-hating funk. But one respected Talossan after another—Pope, Yahn, and Velméir among them—denounced it as “balkanizing” the RT into rival groups. Worse yet, the new group sought to monopolize the field of “culture” to its own partisan advantage, suggesting for instance that the Liberal Party discussion board was the proper place to talk about the Talossan language.

4. Backed by virtually the entire political establishment, King Robert I made a major fuss about it in his Speech from the Throne (“Mr Anglemark, tear down this wall!”) which was otherwise a lengthy and thoughtful address on the significance of Talossa’s independence, delivered on 26 December 1999, the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Talossan state. Drawing upon his own impending divorce from Queen Jenny as a metaphor, the King excoriated this latest effort to divide Talossans into two embittered camps. Public outcry and a very active boycott helped collapse the rival discussion group, so Anglemark responded by continuing the long tradition of quitting the Secretary of State’s office in a huff. After a brief tussle with Dabrowski, Chris Gruber emerged in January as the eighth Secretary of State since the office was created in 1987, despite worries about his commitment to the job. Predictably, Gruber resigned shortly thereafter in a passive-aggressive fit, and Daviu Foctéir took up the responsibility very professionally.

5. The first Clark of the year 2000 saw an absurd debate over whether Talossa should retain the Metric system, which revealed a serious rift between a few Liberal Cybercits who didn't care what measurements Talossans in Talossa really used—and the Old Growthers and their Cyber allies, who saw English measures as a historic (and globally quaint) part of real life in a Milwaukee-based nation. Both sides claimed the other was being un-Talossan, but Gruber had the last word: “For crying out loud, those Milwaukeeans built their town on our country! They're bound to coopt some of our stuff!” Both houses of the Ziu rejected Metric by a wide margin.

6. Alarmingly, this Cyber/non-Cyber debate was followed by a third Lib crisis. It was realized that Talossan law, assigning Cybercits to provinces based on their geographical location, gave the fast-growing, European-based province of Cézembre (picture) a potential ‘gene pool’ fifteen times as large as any other province. So when Ben suggested giving all provinces a more equal share of likely citizens, it was again the Swedish Anglemark who went berserk, accusing him of scheming to “abolish Cézembre,” a charge Ben called “loony” and which ignored the fact that his plan still left Cézembre with twice as many potential citizens as any other province.

7. All these ‘incidents’ were swept under the rug as the April 2000 election began. Basking in the glow of worldwide publicity thanks to a feature on Talossa in *Wired* magazine, civility descended across the nation, and the PC actually ran a “positive” campaign. Little was said about opposing parties—and as Tory insiders suspected, that was a blunder. The Libs swept up the middle with a mail campaign accusing the Tories of “corruption” and claiming that they – the heirs of Dan Wardlow, and the only party with members encouraging ‘bug nations’ to harass and denounce Talossans – were the patriots to lead Talossa in the next Government. The Libs swept the vote of people who paid no attention to RT politics, while the Tories let them pass without a response. While the PC got respectable totals among the new Cybercit voters, it did not keep pace with the new opposition parties; some Tories asked aloud whether Talossa was being taken over by “colonists” who didn't identify with the traditional institutions of the Kingdom.

8. Analysts predicted the PC Party was at the end of its unprecedented string of majority wins: ten straight, starting in October 1993. Some 67% of eligible voters had joined Talossa since the PC streak began six and a half years earlier. But when the last vote was counted, the PC had won 11 seats, an absolute majority, on the strength of an expensive re-election effort which involved long-distance calls around the globe. The ZPT had a disappointing 3, as the Ben-haters flocked to the Liberal banner. Also battered by defections to the Libs, the RCT, a party best described as “nice”, won a paltry two seats, a defeat which Madison verbosely called “the rape of our last innocence.” The Liberals, after spending seven months annoying all the other parties, emerged as a viable Opposition, and with four seats, the second largest party in the state. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty (April-December 2000) “Clerico-Fascist Nitwits”

“If betraying the nation... isn’t worth getting excited over, what is?”

1. Talossans of all stripes—except of course the Liberals—reacted with amazingly consistent horror at the sudden rise of the new party. The PC, secure in its narrow majority, viewed the battered ZPT and RCT as potential partners, suggesting the three parties pool their resources.

2. The 5 August 2000 TalossaFest, held at Yahn’s house, hosted Gariçéir, Foctéir, and Brazilian **Albrec’ht Lupulardít** (picture, left; with the King) of the RCT. King Robert also invited his girlfriend, new Talossan **Amy Durnford**. During the party, a silly argument erupted over sports (not normally a big issue in Talossa) between Amy and macho John Eiffler, who was comprehensively “beaten by a girl,” humiliated by Amy’s encyclopædic knowledge of sports. The personality clash between Eiffler and Durnford would have serious long-term consequences. Meanwhile, Albrec’ht noted that the Libs may have triumphed simply on account of their English-language name; other parties used Talossan names, meaningless to the unassimilated, culturally half-digested Lumpenproletariat that had congealed behind the Libs. But in a clever attempt to unite the opposition parties against the PC, the Libs this time backed the ZPT candidate for OpLeader, Gary Conâ, rather than their own leader, the monotonously diplomatic Dan Rogerson.

3. Meanwhile **J. Kelley**, an otherwise nice enough guy, applied for citizenship, then off-handedly announced that he worshipped Zeus and Poseidon. This drew light-hearted ribbing from Talossans of a more conventional religious bent; Kelley denounced them all as “fundamentalist bigots” and quit! It turned political when the Libs asked Kelley to reapply. He did so, with their blessing, declaring that “true” Talossans were on his side and the rest of the country could go to hell (or hades). The PC saw Kelley as an argumentative weirdo and also as a sure Lib voter. Still, only after much arm-twisting did the Ziu vote down his second citizenship application.

4. The Libs retaliated in September 2000 with one of the most bizarre scandals Talossa has ever seen. King Robert submitted a bill formally annulling previous RT law on his marriage to Queen Jenny (his divorce was slowly moving through the US courts, the result of Jenny’s abusive and unfaithful conduct). The Libs’ Jay Shorten, known for his earlier insistence on his “right” to vote down all Gay prospectives, rose in the Cosâ to denounce Ben’s divorce as “revolting and disgusting... [it] manages to offend God, justice, and decency at the same time.” He explained that “the Catholic catechism” (misread, other RT Catholics noted) ordered him to “positively forbid” all Talossans from divorcing. He said the OrgLaw, which allows divorce, “abrogates” [sic] to Talossans “a power that belongs only to God.” He urged “all Roman Catholics” to support the Liberal Party, claimed the divorce arose from Ben’s “distressing, revolting, and unreasoning hatred,” and savaged Ben personally, urging for instance that Ben be ousted from his church (which had already reviewed the issue and found him blameless).

5. It was ironic that the whole fiasco stemmed from a Catholic Fundamentalist defending a Zeus-worshipper. And Shorten represented no right-wing faction, but a “Liberal Party” which claimed to have been founded on “liberal principles” like separation of church and state. To nobody’s surprise, the “Liberals” pooh-poohed their leader’s ravings, praising his “expression of conscience” after the King called him a “clerico-fascist nitwit.” The PC backed Ben, while the Libs voted *en bloc* against granting

the King a divorce. The measure passed thanks largely to the ZPT's Gary Conâ, an actual liberal, who led the charge to approve the bill, challenging the hardly "liberal" nature of the Liberal Party. Shorten quietly resigned his seat in a black fog of scandal. An RCT spokesman described the whole affair as "nutso out the wazoo."

6. The debate raised, again, the Libs' past support for the "Penguinean" traitors' clique (which had just collapsed, to widespread Talossan chuckles) and for Wardlow's 1998 PFPT government. Lib spokesman Anglemark kept praising Wardlow and denounced Talossa for "trying to actively slander and hurt" the poor traitors who had quit. This drove Wardlow's replacement, ex-PM Chris Gruber, over the brink. He published a file of secret emails between Wardlow and the traitors' clique which showed "an almost Watergate-like secret planning" on Wardlow's part. The revelation was a national catharsis. Many who had joined Talossa since 1998, and never quite saw what all the fuss was about, were shocked by the depth of PFPT betrayal. New Tories like PM Michael Pope grilled the Libs on their soft line on treason: "If betraying the nation that entrusted you with all they have isn't worth getting excited over, what is?" They answered only with personal attacks.

7. As the election drew near, the Opposition was enlarged by Maxime Charbonneau, the Florencia senator lately expelled from the PC for remarks about "Jewish domination" of US politics during a spate of riots in Israel. He joined the normally fun-loving RCT, who were embarrassed by his outbursts as the vote began. The Libs too hailed Yasser Arafat as an "ex-terrorist" and played down the brutal murder of four unarmed Jews by a Palestinian mob; the PC and ZPT worked together like grownups to draft a moderate compromise statement which condemned the violence.

8. RT voters went to the polls on 14 December 2000. 51 voters cast ballots – the highest turnout in any Talossan election in history. Pope went into the campaign in high spirits and predicted an easy win, especially after Anglemark smeared Talossa's whole 21 year history as "Ben Madison's continuous search for someone to attack" and Rogerson made silly insinuations about Ben's sex life. The controversy took its toll: the Libs fell from 4 to 3 Cosâ seats and lost nearly one quarter of their support. The ZPT dwindled further to an all-time low of 2 seats; the RCT gained a seat, to 3; a mysterious and controversial protest party, the TLFN, fielded by Tom Buffone and/or **Greg Aldous**, won a seat (and the two sued each other over who should sit in it). The Tories held steady at 11 seats, a clear majority, with 52.94% of the popular vote, despite the failure of several Tory "pocket votes" to cast ballots. PM Michael Pope had been elected to a third straight term, and the PC continued to govern Talossa—as it had since 1993. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty-One (January-August 2001)
“The Renunciators”

“...a ham-fisted, third-world attempt [to] poke Talossa in the eye with a sharp stick.”



1. The millennium began strangely with ex-Talossan Ron Rosáis returning from ‘exile.’ The more balanced half of the defunct Davron duo, he rediscovered the RT on the Web. The Cort, with unanimity and even enthusiasm, approved his return, despite efforts by Leftists to lure him into arguments, in hopes of causing some sort of angry blow-up that would get the Cort to vote him down. More sensible Talossans who ignored politics, like Tomás Gariçéir, used the time after the election to work on the ever-growing vocabulary of the Talossan language, the 1997 dictionary of which already seemed out of date.

2. Meanwhile **C. Williams**, a non-citizen micronation fan, stormed from nowhere onto Wittenberg hurling phlegm at the RT for “spamming” him (turns out he was on an outdated RT mailing list). King Robert, painfully tired of the whole ‘micronations’ debate, urged this “bug-sucking ooze-bag” to leave Talossa alone. Liberal Johan Anglemark sprang to Williams’ aid, blasting Talossa as always: “What stinks most about Talossa is the behaviour we show against those we think are beneath us. Why does behaving like a jerk have to be a Talossan national trait?” The King muttered that Libs would replace the Defence Ministry with a “Ministry of Apologies.”

3. In an odd twist of fate, one bug nation actually paid Talossa the ultimate complement. Of all the bugs that had harassed the RT, the worst was of course “Penguinea,” the defunct Australia-based clique set up in 1997 by Evan Gallagher. Talossans were joyous when Gallagher reappeared on Wittenberg, apologizing for all the harm he had done to Talossa. His ‘country’ had long since collapsed under the weight of its own loathing and Gallagher expressed his remorse for his misguided attacks on Talossa. He declared that the RT only worked thanks to the “unifying vision” of the very leaders against whom he had fought so bitterly, a statement the PC took as the ultimate vindication of its policy of non-involvement with micronations.

4. Gallagher’s apology was a slap in the face to the Libs, still pining for the halcyon, hippy days of Dan Wardlow and the ‘peace treaty.’ So Lib leader Dan Rogerson decided it was time to bash *Ár Päts*, calling it “totalitarian propaganda.” This had escaped the multi-party OrgLaw Convention of 1996-97, which had made passing a quiz based on *Ár Päts* a requirement for RT citizenship.

5. After Rogerson denounced *Ár Päts*, the King announced that he would refuse to appoint a Liberal government unless voters actually gave them a majority. The Libs were so put out by this, that on 16 March they resigned from the *Cosâ en masse*, declaring a boycott of RT politics for no visible purpose, vowing to return “if Talossa becomes a true democracy,” i.e. one ruled by them. The King gave all three vacant Lib *Cosâ* seats to other Opposition members. The Libs poisoned the well by announcing that they would sit outside the *Cosâ*, cheerfully selling their votes to the highest bidder. “There is no prospect of our voice being heard,” they declared. PM Pope denounced their latest snit-fit as “a ham-fisted, third-world attempt” to “poke Talossa in the eye with a sharp stick.” The Libs responded by attacking the ZPT and the RCT, their only possible coalition partners, for “a certain complicity in

undermining democracy” since these parties didn’t particularly hate the King or the PC. Anglemark called Talossans “stupid” for having their own culture, language, and politics instead of “diplomatic relations” with bug nations. The Libs retreated into a largely inactive funk, claiming that “we are, in effect, a banned party.”

6. Although they had gone about it badly, the Liberals were right about one thing. Talossa, after nearly a decade of PC rule, had “in effect” become a one-party state. Under Michael Pope’s direction, the party was moving right. Many PC voters opposed PC policy, but voted PC anyway out of a sense of obligation to family or friends, or to reject the silly antics and anger of the opposition parties. As long as the King and other pillars of RT society gave their blessing to the PC, it seemed the PC would rule for ever. The one thing standing in the way of an actual dictatorship was Secretary of State Daviu Foctéir of the RCT. As long as elections and government business were handled outside the PC, some checks and balances existed.

7. And that began to change when a corrupt businessman from Canada joined the ranks. **Martin-Pierre Frenette**, CEO of Cablan.net, a Montréal-based ISP, was a classic shyster. A personal acquaintance later reported that Frenette had learned all about “*internet-based dirty tricks*” when he worked for the *Parti Québécois*, the French-Canadian separatist party. Non-citizen Frenette unethically cyber-squatted on several “Talossa”-themed web domains and approached Talossans, at first anonymously, offering to “help” them set up websites, an offer that seemed generous. Soon he was a citizen, Deputy SoS, and, crucially, a PC member. Frenette repackaged websites copied from Hjorth, Sauls, and Foctéir; soon he was running Wittenberg. In a few short months, the Kingdom’s entire web presence was being run by one member of the PC party.

8. Ron Rosáis tried setting up his own party to win over the votes of the self-banned TLP. Trotting out old warnings about how the PC “controlled” Talossa through “pocket votes,” he demanded the government ‘monitor’ Ben, whom he blamed for the fact that Talossans found unpopular views unpopular. But the rôle of foil to the King was temporarily usurped that spring by some bug nations trolling on Wittenberg, posting really vicious personal attacks on Ben over the signatures of inactive Liberal voters, which sounded so Liberal they fooled even Anglemark.

9. Speculation raged over whom the Libs would back in the next election. Nobody really wanted their votes but the half-hearted RCT. Their denouncing every party but theirs as “undermining democracy,” gave the PC, RCT and ZPT a shared sense of hurt. By June they had burned all their bridges and renounced their citizenship one by one at the behest of Anglemark. Days later “the Renunciators” were forgotten. Pope wished them all a statesmanly farewell, while *Distáin* Yahn dismissed them with the catch-phrase *du jour*: “You are the weakest link. Goodbye.” ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty-Two (August 2001-April 2002)
“The Calm Before the Storm”

“...under Talossan law...”

1. Nobody was surprised by the results of the 15 August 2001 General Election, which saw the death of the old Liberal Party. The RCT gained the lion's share of their supporters, winning five seats in the Cosâ (up two). The ZPT gained a third seat, ending their long downward slide. The Tories increased their majority to 12. Turnout sank from 51 to 40 voters, with five Libs gone and several long-time citizens drifting away from contact with the homeland.

2. The nation rallied around its traditional strength, Talossan camaraderie and friendship. In August, 2001, a greatly successful TalossaFest was held at John Yahn's house. With the King and his consort, Amy Durnford (picture), scheduled to leave for Europe in September, John Yahn was sworn in at TalossaFest as Regent, to hold the royal powers in the King's absence. This was all technically illegal since the regency law wasn't voted on till September, but when Ben and Amy left for Europe on 4 September, Talossa was in the firm and steady hands of Regent Yahn and PM Pope. Arriving in Europe, the Royal couple visited Toulouse, home of their (distant) royal ancestors. The Royal visit was a major Talossan event, as the Royals made a point of visiting every Talossan citizen in Europe that would have them, including CÚG member and Talossan language expert **Francesco Felici** in Italy, and retired PM Frédéric Corïu in France.

3. On 11 September, The King and his consort had barely set foot in exotic Sardinia, home to prehistoric Berbers, and the closest to North Africa the Talossan monarch figured he was ever likely to get, before Arab terrorists half a world away crashed three hijacked jetliners into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The King was blissfully unaware of the tragedy for nearly 24 hours, while back in Talossa, life ground to a standstill as in the rest of North America. PM Pope and Regent Yahn immediately made eloquent statements of Talossa's horror at the terrorists. These sentiments were disputed only by the socialist Maxime Charbonneau, who denounced Arabs and Americans with equal vigour. The PM won plaudits from the rest of the citizenry, though the stridently anti-PC J.P. Griffin of the ZPT still voted “no” on Pope's Vote of Confidence in September. The right-wing **Jeff Ragsdale**, a core member of the RCT, and MC for Maricopa, was so impressed by Pope, and so disappointed by the rest of the Opposition, that he crossed the aisle and joined the PC caucus: further solidifying the PC one-party state.

4. An “Anti-Terrorism Act” was quickly passed by the Ziu in October, as the King and his entourage returned from Europe and he reassumed his Royal powers. During November, the fallout from the terrorist attack continued as the King feuded with Dutch RCT member **Jules Beulen** in the Ziu over the King's declaration that anti-war protestors were hypocrites if they defended themselves when attacked. Ron Rosáis of the RCT, whose alleged military background proved to be a valuable service to Prime Minister Pope, organized a Primary Intelligence Group (PIG) with the Ziu's blessing, as a sort of Talossan CIA.

5. By December, Talossans were in a reasonably festive mood, and Yahn hosted the country's first formal Anniversary Party in several years. The highlight of the event was the official Royal Wedding, “under Talossan law,” of King Robert and Queen Amy (picture), linking arms in an Albanian-inspired

“Zog Salute” and reciteing Talossan-language oaths in a ceremony designed and presided over by Justice Eiffler and Tomás Gariçéir. The King offered no Throne Speech, but published “notes” on one on Wittenberg, where he expressed his amazement at how pleasant Talossa felt after the demise of the traitorous Liberals. The last “Penguinian” remnants had at long last been disposed of, Talossans believed; the King announced that an RCT or ZPT government might be good for Talossa – a sign the King was tiring of his long connexion to the increasingly conservative PC party. But he warned that immigration to Talossa had fallen to practically nothing, and cited this as an ominous sign for the future. Nobody else seemed interested in that argument, as most Talossans were too busy enjoying the country’s more peaceful, post-Liberal atmosphere.

6. The country’s political stability (or doldrums, depending on how you looked at it) ended abruptly in February 2002 when Florencia Senator Maxime Charbonneau (RCT) declared his candidacy for re-election. He was challenged by the province’s long-time premier, John Eiffler (PC). While Florencia was an opposition stronghold, many felt Eiffler had a chance to unseat the increasingly isolated Charbonneau. Suddenly, J.P. Griffin, a right-wing member of the left-wing ZPT with a reputation as a Ben-hater, announced his own candidacy and picked up the endorsement of the local RCT. Harkening back to the tactics of the defunct Liberal Party, Griffin called on Talossans to “throttle” Ben Madison, who dared to criticize what he called Griffin’s “joke” campaign. Griffin made the suppression of Madison’s right to speak, a cornerstone of his campaign, and the election ended in a three-way split with Eiffler and Griffin tied. Charbonneau threw his support behind Eiffler, but before the election could end up in the Uppermost Cort of Talossa, Griffin withdrew as mysteriously as he had entered, and everyone agreed that Eiffler had won the seat.

7. The contested race exposed several flaws in the OrgLaw (whose Senäts rules were written almost single-handedly by Evan Gallagher). Frenette and the PC enacted “reforms” which, ominously, transferred yet more power into the hands of the SoS. The King paid little attention, too busy putzing with the name and arms of the Royal Family, named *“The House and Dynasty of Rouergue”* to reflect his Toulousian ancestors of some nine centuries earlier.

8. In April, bored voters re-elected the PC yet again over the divided and demoralized Opposition parties. The ZPT nearly collapsed, leaving the RCT to lead the Opposition along with a couple of bizarre “Star Wars” parties bringing up the distant rear. The only implication for the future was the elevation of the likeable but weirdly secretive Jeff Ragsdale, late of the RCT, as Michael Pope’s running-mate and as the new *Distáin* of the Kingdom of Talossa. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty-Three (April 2002-January 2003)
“The Pot-Pie Blob”

“[The PC’s] monolithic unity and political dominance serve no purpose.”



1. A milestone – or perhaps a millstone – in RT history took place after the April 2002 Election, when SoS Daviu Foctéir (RCT) resigned in favour of Martin-Pierre Frenette. The PC now controlled every single lever of power in the Kingdom. But the PC Party Kingdom they had built was deteriorating. In the election, a record 23 Talossans failed to vote and three ex-PMs lost their citizenship due to apathy, including the fabled Dan Lorentz. (Ben, of course, would try to bring him back.)
2. Since 2000, when the RT had peaked at over 60 citizens, population had steadily declined. A majority of Talossans no longer participated on Wittenberg, tired of the steady diet of partisan bickering, or simply too busy with real life. Talossans began to feel a growing, though subtle, sense of division between ‘full-time Talossans’ who had no real lives, and for whom the game of Talossa occupied nearly all their waking hours, and the majority of the population, who were simply Talossans because they had been Talossans for years and were proud to participate as they saw fit. And, as the PC was the dominant party, the full-time Talossans were drifting into it, seeing it as the best vehicle to show off their talents at rhetoric, web design, or whatever.
3. The ossifying of the Talossan state was exacerbated by its total dependence on Frenette, who was not only running Talossa’s bureaucracy, but running his own business and awaiting the birth of a child. The June Clark was delayed again and again, till finally Chris Gruber sued him in the Cort to force him to publish it. His harsh rhetoric accusing Frenette of erecting a “fascist state” went over badly with the Cort, who reminded him sternly that all work in Talossa is done by busy, unpaid volunteers. As was the Cort; for a long time John Eiffler was the only Justice involved with Talossa’s daily life. This led to efforts—above all from John Yahn, who dreamed about returning to the Cort—to either reactivate or sack Justices Velméir and, especially, Muth.
4. The star of this show proved to be *Distáin* Jeffrey Ragsdale, who defended the Cort and looked statesmanly. His boss, PM Michael Pope, had been in office since May of 1999 (three years; then the longest tenure in RT history) and was looking to take over as National Archivist. When Ragsdale visited Talossa in June (Ben met him at the airport waving the RT flag) the PM chose to retire with grace, advising Ragsdale to “take care of our Kingdom.” All parties heaped praise on Pope, who was welcomed into the ranks of “Talossa’s elder statesmen.” At the Mussolini Province gyros shop where most of the OrgLaw was written, Jeff Ragsdale was sworn in as Talossa’s 26th *Seneschál* on the evening of 25 June 2002 with Gary Conâ, de facto Opposition Leader, holding *The Loom of Language*, on which PMs had traditionally taken their oaths since 1981. It had been seven years since a PM was actually sworn in on Talossan soil.
5. Constantly chatting on Witt, setting up a short-lived online paper and issuing a barrage of PDs, Jeff kept up the “official” side of the office; his policy of phoning Talossans worldwide, just to keep in touch, was a masterstroke. His government was rocked by a burst of premarital jitters when Queen Amy

announced she was calling off the Royal Marriage “under American law,” set for August, and on 29 June abdicated her Queenly duties. Luckily for all, after encouragement from the King and other Talossans, Amy soon announced that she would “be ever honoured to put heavy patriotic objects on my head,” and the wedding went as planned.

6. More serious for Talossa’s future was Attorney General **John Minot’s** angry renunciation of his citizenship on 1 July. He denounced RT inactivity, the lack of credible opposition to the PC, and Talossans’ monotonous commentary on US politics on Witt. Talossans barely noticed; with the government on holiday, the King and Queen were married, “under American law,” outdoors in Vuode Province on 24 August. In attendance were more than a dozen Talossans, including Foctéir, Lupulardít and Gariçéir. TalossaFest 2002, held the next day, was a huge success; the Royal couple then left for their honeymoon on the US East Coast where they met Michael Pope, to whom they handed over the priceless contents of the entire National Archives.

7. The cultural renaissance that began with the departure of the Liberals continued that autumn when Tomás Gariçéir placed the entire *Treisoúr del Glheb Talossán* (the Talossan language dictionary) online. Several citizens were now updating the *Treisoúr*, and chats about grammar and vocabulary peppered Witt with welcome Talossa-centric discussion. Citizens were working on .pdf files of many of Talossa’s classic books, and all this was even being reported in *Stotannen*, the Kingdom’s oldest newspaper, briefly revived online by Gariçéir.

8. But the US congressional election was also approaching, filling Witt with savage US partisan attacks. In that context, Ben Madison returned to familiar themes, in an impassioned speech on 9 October. Denouncing “massive, widespread apathy,” he claimed that Talossa’s modern PC party was built not to fight apathy but to fight “monsters like Gallagher and Anglemark.” Blasting the PC’s cautious stance on immigration, he noted that our stringent laws had turned away good prospectives while completely failing to keep out the “monsters.” He even declared the PC’s “monolithic unity and political dominance serve no purpose” any more, a statement of virtual political heresy. Only Ragsdale bothered to respond, joining Frenette in tinkering with immigration reform. The PC establishment, with its vested interest in holding down immigration (which disproportionately favoured opposition parties), was hardly keen on bold ventures.

9. Republicans won the US election; Tories turned on each other. Chris Gruber shouted “f*ck America!” and called Bush supporters “greedy, selfish f*cks.” Yahn fell to the occasion, denouncing Democrats as “pukely” and “dumbass,” and crowing “F*ck you, assholes!” PC unity tottered as Yahn, who had been drifting to the right under Pope’s influence, declared he was “sick of the idiocy spewed over and over again against the US Republican Party within the PC Party.” Questioning why he was in the same RT party as Gruber to begin with, he quoted Wes Enrici’s 1989 warning that the PC had again become an agendaless “pot-pie blob,” existing only to shut the Opposition out of power. As it turned out, most Talossans agreed.

10. Gruber and Gariçéir launched a creepy advert blitz showing their own heads mounted onto Italian uniforms in what Talossans hoped was only an oddball parody of the country’s fascistic ancient past; on 3 December they quit the PC and set up a *Parti del Congreßeu Grischun* (Grey Congress Party, PCG) emphasizing nativist Talossan issues like language and Berber mythology. A bigger shock came the very next day when Wes Enrici and Ben Madison, only dimly aware of the PCG, declared their own

“xenophobic rabble-rousing” schism, resurrecting Enrici’s *La Mbà Nbeagrâ* or “Black Hand” (MN; see picture). Its ethos resembled the PCG’s, but its more thoughtful programme called for radical immigration reform and a revival of the old 200 seat Cosâ.

11. The January 2003 election was a frenzied, hilarious supernova of debate on RT affairs between the PC, PCG, MN, RCT, and a ZPT led by a revived Ken Velméir. Issues included the PCG stuffing the online advertising rotation with dozens of ads, which had the effect of squeezing out competition; critics responded by mocking and defacing their ads, and Gruber’s temper became a major campaign issue as Gruber’s PCG violently attacked the other parties and then, true to its leader’s passive-aggressive tradition, rewrote its platform after others criticized it.

12. Staying above the frenzy of charges, the PC emerged triumphant as the single largest party. At 31% the PC was still well short of a majority, but the result demonstrated that the famous “pocket votes,” who everybody stereotypically expected to vote for Ben’s MN party, were in fact a very fluid and persuadable electorate, and the PC had done a better job persuading them. It was only by opening its ranks to citizens like Márcüs Cantaloûr, marginalized by a decade of PC monopoly, that the MN took second place at just under 29% of the vote. The ZPT passed the RCT to finish in 3rd place; small parties fared worse. The results meant that Prime Minister Jeff Ragsdale, no expert on compromise, had to cobble together Talossa’s first coalition government since 1993.

13. The election of 14 January 2003 was a landmark in Talossa’s political evolution for many reasons. The failure of the PC to retain its majority after a decade of victories stood the Talossan political system on its head, for ever delegitimizing the incestuous, monopolistic relationship between state and party. After 2003, such a relationship no longer existed, and the future of Talossa would depend on the behaviour and organizational strength of several rival parties.

14. As for the PC, everyone looked to see which direction the party which had single-handedly dominated RT life for a decade would take. Were the Tories emotionally capable of sharing power and adjusting to life as just one party out of many, like the Soviet Communist Party after Gorbachev, or the Mexican PRI after 2000? Or did the PC really believe its own outdated, self-indulgent rhetoric about being “the party of the nation” and somehow “more Talossan” than other Talossans? Did they see Talossa as everyone’s commonwealth, or theirs alone? A strong PC, committed to democracy and the common future of all Talossans, and which would build on its evident success in persuading swing voters to vote for its vision of the country, would have been a tremendous blessing to Talossa. But the authoritarian urge was just too strong. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty-Four (January-October 2003)
“EM200”

“It is shameful! It is an embarrassment!”

1. The ostrichistic ZPT made coalition-building easier by claiming the PC, MN, and PCG were all still the same party, forcing them to talk to each other about forming the next government. Still, Jeff Ragsdale put the first Clark of 2003 off till March to give him time to soothe Gruber, who was fuming over criticism from the MN and expected the Deputy PM-ship even though the MN won more votes. Eventually Gruber backed down—the MN made a point of not backing down—and Florencia’s **Devin Burr**, a new conservative member of the MN, became *Distáin* in the PC-MN-PCG “Ragsdale Coalition.”



2. The ZPT belatedly tried to make common cause with the PC by picking on “pocket votes,” urging Talossans to “fight” and “get rid of” Ben’s dad, sister, and Jean Williams, whose minimal activity somehow kept the other 50 Talossans from achieving their cosmic destiny. Inactive voters, of course, were never a problem for the PC while they voted PC; but where the MN had made a better pitch, these same Talossans were suddenly villains and scum. Gary Conâ (ZPT-Vuode) suggested that the Cort could disqualify Ben’s wife Amy from running for Senäts on the grounds that her *husband* couldn’t be a Senator. Vuodeans elected her, for the MN, in January.

3. “Pocket votes” collided with the year’s dominant issue, the Enrici/Madison 200 seat Cosâ scheme, nicknamed “EM200.” The MN and PCG pushed EM200, while the ZPT and RCT, who claimed to do better under the status quo, savaged it as “buglike” and “fake,” since it revived the Talossan tradition of allowing each MC to hold up to 30 Cosâ seats. Proponents noted that no known “bug nation” actually used such a system, while corporations and city councils do use these types of weighted voting. Opponents also claimed that EM200 would help “pocket votes” by allowing less active voters to vote for candidates without having to *be* candidates—a situation that EM200 proponents noted was the very definition of representative democracy itself.

4. PC Cort Justice John Eiffler had lately grown touchy and bitter, but nobody saw this coming. On 28 January 2003 Eiffler’s Uppermost Cort announced that it had secretly restored traitor Johan Anglemark’s RT citizenship. The move was blatantly illegal: citizenship had to be restored in a public process (OrgLaw XVIII, Sec. 12). Expecting to be hailed as the Messiah, Anglemark stormed back denouncing the King’s “ranting, bickering, and ceaseless attacks.” Wittenberg shook to its foundations while the King invoked a rarely-used clause in the OrgLaw to veto the Cort’s action, forcing Anglemark to reapply through the normal public process. (He refused.) The MN demanded an inquiry. Ragsdale appointed a “Gruber Commission,” chaired by the ex-PM, to investigate. Gruber flung subpoenas in all directions, demanding private emails from anyone who might know. The RCT’s Jules Beulen, who unconvincingly denied any involvement, denounced these “McCarthyesque demands” and the Cort quickly quashed Gruber’s authoritarian subpoenas.

5. Gruber’s final report absolved everyone of wrongdoing but did prove that the Cort had become hopelessly out of touch with RT politics. The issue of tossing out Justices Velméir and Muth (Michael Pope called them Talossa’s “aloof mandarins”) would simmer for the rest of 2003.

6. Another out-of-touch group were voters in Mussolini Province, most of whom were not active on Wittenberg, but could still, of course, vote. This became a political issue in January 2003 when their own Senator, Matthias Muth, railed against this fact: “It is shameful! It is an embarrassment!” Long-time Mussolini resident Tom Buffone, continuing his long tradition of meteoric, momentary reappearances, then challenged Muth for the Senäts. The result, in February, was a landslide. The new MN had picked up a 2nd senatorship, leaving PC politicians angry that stupid Talossan voters had cost them another seat that they, as Talossa’s historic ruling party, were simply ‘entitled to.’

7. In spite of PC stagnation – Archivist Michael Pope sat on the national archives for two years and didn’t update them – Talossa’s national culture moved on without them. Madison rewrote his prize-winning high-school epic “2212” to become “*Desciüt*,” the first chapter in a novel about prehistoric Talossa. Talossans debated their national anthem, whether to keep Fleetwood Mac’s *Tusk*, revive John Yahn’s unfinished orchestral hymn, or adopt a decade-old royal paean to the Talossan language that Ben had lately rewritten as a broader patriotic anthem, *Stand Tall, Talossans*.

8. But the anthem debate was drowned out that spring by the drums of war, as the RT’s US ally moved closer to war on Iraq. Debates kept Wittenberg busy for weeks. Finally, on 18 March 2003, PM Ragsdale, backed by most Talossans, declared war against Saddam Hussein (the RT still quaintly does such things). “War is not something this government wants,” declared the Prime Minister, “nor does any sane person, but it is something that needs to be done.”

9. Rogue anti-war MN MC **Pete Hottelet** breathed new life into the EM200 debate that month by voting ‘no’ on the Vote of Confidence, drawing attention to “cadre parties” like the PC and MN, which had trouble under the 20-seat system because they had small active memberships but large blocs of public support, which meant having to appoint apathetic or unpredictable supporters to fill seats. They would do better under EM200, since each active member could fill up to 30 seats. So in May the MN formally proposed EM200 to the Ziu, arguing that EM200 would also help small “activist parties” like the ZPT, that didn’t win enough seats in a 20-seat Cosâ to allow all their members to participate. The MN took its argument further, threatening to quit the ruling coalition if EM200 were defeated. “I’m in favour of rattling the cage,” Devin Burr told *Stotanneu*, “and of course in dramatic fashion.” Amid hints of compromise, the MN stuck with the coalition even though EM200 was defeated in the PC-dominated Senäts. The RCT’s Charbonneau then declared his support not only for EM200, but for the MN.

10. The PC increased its hold on the Senäts in June, when Jeff Ragsdale’s fellow Maricopans got him to run for the seat vacated by the retiring Albrec’ht Lupulardít (RCT). There was no June Clark, the PM having declared a “month of recess” to gear up for a Living Cosâ scheduled for July. But a noisy backbench revolt made fun of Ragsdale’s ‘abuse’ of the Prime Dictate. He had overloaded people’s imaginations by issuing at least fifty, mostly eulogizing dead Americans like David Brinkley, Buddy Ebsen, and even segregationist US Senator Strom Thurmond, a controversy Madison called “Strom und Drang.”

11. On 12 July 2003, a record number of out-of-town visitors including PM Jeff Ragsdale, Tomás Gariçéir (who brought big Talossan flags for purchase), and Chris Gruber, gathered for TalossaFest in Vuode Province. The festivities were marred by Gruber’s surly treatment of his own girlfriend (“shut up, bitch”) and his unbelievable rudeness, storming into Burnham Palace and ordering Queen Amy out of her own living room so he could watch Talossa videos. While not Talossa’s most active citizen, Amy

managed to crash the PC old boys' club on several occasions, upstaging them with her encyclopædic knowledge of sports and her very perceptive sense of psychology. The appearance of a brash, strong-willed woman as a figure in RT politics threatened the all-male PC's sense of ego and their self-image of Talossa as an exclusively online nerd clique, not a real-life face-to-face society including friends, families, and uppity women.

12. At the first Living Cosâ since 2000, Ben made couscous. MCs voted to repeal Ragsdale's PD lionizing Thurmond; his PC supporters claimed Thurmond was being dissed just because he eventually became a Republican. Legislators then turned to EM200. The RCT claimed EM200 somehow violated the "one man, one vote" principle since, for the first time, it let voters in each province elect their own MCs, rather than treating the whole kingdom as a single constituency. Florencia Senator John Eiffler (PC) warned that under EM200, the King might personally hold enough Cosâ seats to effectively sustain his own vetoes. But King Robert, as always, offered a compromise, under which the King could still sit in the Cosâ, but gave up his right to vote on his own vetoes. Now most PC and ZPT objectors concurred that EM200 might revitalize Talossa, and both houses passed it by an overwhelming majority.

13. The King unveiled new oval "RT" nationality bumper stickers (picture), though getting funds from Talossans was like squeezing blood from a stone. The Royals soon made a Talossan state visit to Canada where they met with Frenette, Charbonneau, and Daviu Foctéir. Meanwhile, the on-again, off-again immigration of new Canadian-Talossan **Marc Moisan** exposed what a dilapidated and confusing mess Talossa's online immigration system had become. This led to friction with PC Immigration Minister Pope; test emails sent to Pope, to see if he responded at all to immigration requests, went unanswered. Talossans wondered if the PC was deliberately suppressing or diverting immigration. No one knows how many prospective Talossans were ignored like this, but immigration dwindled to almost nothing in 2003.

14. Strained by the breakup of the PC and the adoption of a revolutionary new electoral system, traditional RT politics continued to break down as the fall election approached. The RCT dramatically dissolved; its leader Jules Beulen, suspected by many of collusion in the effort to bring back his friend Johan Anglemark, was moving closer to the PC and in fact voted PC in the election. When the ZPT failed to register at all, Talossans realized they were headed for an election of extraordinary significance and excitement. ●●●

Ár Páts, Part Fifty-Five (October 2003-April 2004) “The Halloween Crisis”

*“I will cut off your balls. I do not f*cking play.”*

1. 34 voters elected the new 200-seat Cosâ elected on 14 October 2003. It showed off the incoherence of the old opposition: ZPT and RCT voters scampered to all three “ex-PC” coalition parties (PC, MN, PCG), which together won 96% of the vote. A shattered ZPT emerged with only seven seats in Vuode on write-in support. Gruber’s PCG (48 seats), with its call to “end seriousness” in RT politics, surged into a virtual tie with the PC (49). The MN, with great leftist support, won 96 of the 200 seats, but no majority. With 193 seats, Ragsdale seemed the most secure PM in Talossa’s 24-year history.

2. Five days later, Ragsdale announced that due to “burnout” and some mysterious, unspecified “life changes,” he was resigning. Ragsdale asked the MN, as the near-majority party, to name a new PM, and the MN chose experienced left-wing ex-Senator Maxime Charbonneau (picture). Jeff hailed Max’s “exemplary” Talossan work, but denounced his past comments about “the United States and Israel,” and refused to consider him – or any other available MN nominee. So began Talossa’s “Halloween Crisis.”

3. The MN and Gruber, who felt taken for granted, signed a Joint Statement urging the PC to join them as equal partners in a “real coalition.” But Gruber saw this as a way to knock off the “arrogant” PC, not save the coalition: *“If we pull this off, the PC’s decisions will automatically be rendered null and void, right?”* Then Gruber suddenly yanked his party’s names off the Joint Statement, demanding a Cort seat for himself in exchange for his help. Rumours swirled that he had also secretly turned to the PC for a better offer. Sure enough, a disgusted MN had no sooner given in to Gruber’s “bargaining nonsense,” than the PC, which had shouted Gruber out for his “f*ck America” rhetoric in 2002, declared him their “pro-American” PM candidate for 2003 in an alliance against the “anti-American” Charbonneau. The newly-anointed PC standard-bearer denied he had signed the Joint Statement in the first place: *“We were shoved into this whole goddamn thing against our f*cking wills, you sanctimonious ass!”* Gruber’s authoritarian tendencies and manic-depressive anger were now infused with real political power and he used them all with gusto.

4. The MN was happy to sit calmly as the Official Opposition, until PM-designate Gruber vowed to dissolve the Cosâ. A refreshingly articulate Gary Conâ, leading the rump ZPT, agreed with the MN that early elections were a bad idea with tempers flaring, and backed Charbonneau for PM. Since the MN and ZPT held a majority (103 seats) between them, the King simply asked Charbonneau to form an MN-ZPT majority government (with Conâ as *Distáin*) and swore him in by telephone on 11 November, supposedly ending the Halloween Crisis.

5. The PC-PCG Opposition elected Michael Pope as OpLeader, while Gruber slid further into what Ben called “clinical paranoia,” ranting in a blaze of neo-Nazi artwork that “subhuman” MN “mongrels” were out to “destroy Talossa.” The MN published its own internal emails in *Stotanneu* in an effort to show its good intentions, and asked the Opposition to do the same; they responded with a bucket of spleen and acid extreme even by RT standards, denouncing the “total sh*thead” majority’s election of Charbonneau as a “sleazy back-room deal.” Working like a gentleman with all sides, Charbonneau asked PCG member **Andy Lowry** to replace the MN’s own Márcüs Cantaloûr as Immigration Minister; Lowry renounced his citizenship. A tidal wave of venom enveloped Wittenberg. The King came close to

renouncing *his* citizenship, while the PC claimed that these friendship-destroying snit-fits kept Talossa from being “boring.”

6. In what the King called “the gravest crime Talossa has ever seen,” the RT exploded in verbal violence on 22 November after the PC launched what amounted to a coup d’état. Frenette, as SoS, illegally stripped Gary Conâ of his ZPT Cosâ seats, handing them over to J.P. Griffin, who had voted for the PC, not the ZPT. This created a new “majority” for the PC-PCG Opposition, which then “elected” Ragsdale PM. With the lawful PM, Cosâ and Monarchy on one side and the PC party Cort, Senäts and SoS on the other, the whole of Talossa teetered on the brink of collapse or mass defections. Gruber taunted the King: *“I hope you cry your bitch eyes out.”*

7. At this point, the Uppermost Cort intervened, Justice Velméir declaring that the ZPT’s seats were lawfully Gary Conâ’s. This gave Charbonneau the moral high ground and the majority (again), as did Gruber’s unending, vixenish railing against the “flamboyant paranoid conspiratorial distortions” of “Ben the Hemorrhoid.” Gruber’s non-stop attacks became increasingly more desperate, bizarre, and personal, attacking Ben’s job, parents, and especially Queen Amy, calling her a “whore” and an “ancient crone,” and telling Ben *“your woman talks too much and I’m the only one in Talossa who can out-talk her,”* referring to the living room videos incident that summer. (So much for ‘ending seriousness’ in RT politics.) Exasperated, Tomás Gariçéir quit Gruber’s party and RT public life. The King announced dryly that Gruber would *not* be getting a Cort seat, a decision quietly applauded by the Cort. “Gruber is a woman scorned,” smiled the Queen.

8. The PC now seemed willing to work around Gruber for a truce. Violently opposed to Maxime as PM for his “anti-American” views, the PC proposed a transition under Ragsdale, with the MN’s Devin Burr to take over as PM in January, 2004. When King Robert and Cort Justice Yahn (lately reappointed on Muth’s resignation) met for the “Noodles Summit” in Mussolini on 25 November, the MN agreed: Charbonneau would gracefully step aside for the sake of national unity. Equally stunning was the King’s declaration that he would turn in his MN membership and Cosâ seats, and amend the OrgLaw to permanently remove the King from the legislature, a sticking point with the now ex-royalist PC. A handshake formalized the deal, and on 2 December Jeff Ragsdale was sworn in again as PM. Gruber had agreed to be Propaganda Minister in the new all-party government, but, hours later, sneeringly quit. A fatigued Charbonneau gradually dropped out of Talossa, to a chorus of unprofessional high-fiving from the PC benches. The King, as usual, compromised.

9. Ragsdale’s footnote government nearly passed without incident. The King, in a downcast yet prickly Anniversary Speech on 26 December 2003, reiterated that Charbonneau was still a better candidate than Gruber. Gruber then threatened suicide, savaged Ben’s wife (and beard) again, mocked the death of Ben’s mother, demanded Ben’s own murder, and warned: *“I f*cking warned you and everyone else: if you kick me in the knees, I will cut off your balls. I do not f*cking play.”* Ragsdale defended Gruber (“he is not an evil, sick, twisted person”). Fortunately, on 1 January 2004, Devin Burr was sworn in as PM to replace him at the head of the coalition. A music major from Kansas, Burr vowed to “serve our nationette as best I can.” The computer-savvy Gruber pumped the internet full of “requests” for someone to come kill Ben (legalistically insisting these were not “threats”), while Ben’s computer was attacked with viruses that caused several hundred dollars of damage.

10. The MN’s promised reconciliation bore fruit as Geoff Tomasüt and Dan Lorentz rejoined RT public

life. But just as the MN seemed to be gathering steam, J.P. Griffin announced in February that the ZPT had “*unanimously*” voted to merge with the PC, putting the entire Cort and six-sevenths of the Senäts, back under PC control. But this “unanimous” vote was taken without notifying either ZPT founder Ken Velméir, or the party’s only MC, Gary Conâ! Both later declared support for the MN. More significantly, the merger put Griffin and Frenette, owners of almost all Talossa’s websites and domain names, into the same bitterly angry, troubled minority party.

11. Voter surveys indicated that after the next cycle of Senäts elections, the PC would lose every seat except Gruber’s safe seat in PC-dominated Maritiimi-Maxhestic. For now, the King sought to keep the PC-dominated government honest and accountable. He tried working with Frenette to reform elections in provinces where apathy and corruption were rife: the PC had just staged a one-man “secret election” in Mussolini Province so Matthias Muth (enjoying a 99-year term of office as governor under a constitution he wrote!) could vote himself into the Senäts without opposition. Frenette unilaterally “edited” Ben’s bill on the Clark to negate most of the reforms.

12. The breaking point came in April when Senator Amy Durnford, a victim of domestic abuse, wrote a bill to remove violent criminals from Talossa. The PC saw this as an attack on Gruber, whose criminal record of fraud, theft, and a violent assault against a woman, was on the Leon County, Florida website. Ragsdale, who had a bag full of his own personal secrets, panicked; PC Justice Eiffler filed an injunction to ban the Cosâ from even voting on it, then tiresomely renounced his citizenship “from this fascist vitriolic hell hole” for the umpteenth time.

13. PC members ratcheted up their attacks, claiming the King had “lost his mind.” Frenette demanded a PC-controlled online “republic” with the power to kick out all dissenting Talossans. “*I control Talossa.com,*” he threatened. But the nation was stunned silent when, on 13 April, Chris Gruber announced: “I wish I had been able to better control my temper. For this out-and-out stupidity on my part, I apologise.” The King joyously accepted Gruber’s apology, calling it “a genuine resolution, a sincere apology, and a damn good start,” and posted several messages on Wittenberg exulting in the new spirit of inter-party reconciliation and dialogue. It lasted *ninety minutes*, before Gruber and the PC minority were on the rampage again. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty-Six (April-June 2004)
“The Real Talossa”

“What does your majority do for Talossa?”

1. Gruber called the King “absurd” for hoping to actually resolve anything: “Don’t go reading into this anything beyond what it is: an apology for the personal remarks. That’s all. That’s it.” High-school Nazi Yahn compared Ben to the Gestapo, a personal slight that seriously strained their long friendship. “That’s the pot calling the kettle black,” commented Brook Pànetâ, a long-time mutual friend. “Why is our nice colonial dame associating himself with such white trash [as Gruber]?” When Pànetâ offered to come and mediate, Yahn shouted him down: *“Don’t talk to Ben!”*

2. Ragsdale demanded that Ben be “expelled from Talossa” for pointing out Gruber’s violent criminal record, confirming what most people already knew about the PC. The PC had revealed its “vision” for Talossa in April with Frenette’s plan to “resolve” it into a PC-ruled rump state on the internet, kicking out the majority of Talossans, walking off with the websites and pretending to be Talossa. In a nice Orwellian twist, the PC branded those they planned to expel, “separatists.” Frenette redesigned Wittenberg, topping every page with a grey banner attacking Madison, turning the nation’s “neutral” forum into a screaming al-Qaeda rally. The King and others simply walked away. Witt became a prune-like self-parody, its few remaining denizens talking about Xbox and making knock-knock jokes. Old Growthers Conâ and Rosáis led brave rearguard actions to fend them off. (Rosáis’ comment on the PC’s plan to ditch the monarchy was “There are some things you just don’t f*ck with.”) The King irreverently called the PC and its allies “white settlers,” migrants who felt they owned Talossa just because they ran some websites and used to be the majority, once upon a time.

3. The King, as usual, also naïvely offered to compromise. He asked the PC to suggest five names to possibly fill the Cort vacancy, so the replacement would have their support. Happy to have Yahn as the only truly active Justice, they answered only with conceited indignance.

4. Hounded off line, their bills annulled by the PC party Cort, under constant threat of having Frenette steal their Cosâ seats, Talossans with normal lives began to free themselves from the Frenette/PC media empire. A renewal network, known simply as “the Real Talossa,” took shape by email, phone, and in face-to-face meetings. In Atatürk, Gary Conâ proposed a “peaceful buyout”: the majority could buy the Talossa.com domain name and allow the white settlers to go their own way under some other name. Frenette angrily rejected any peaceful solution; after all, he had spent weeks working on the country’s web page (which somehow trumped everybody else’s 24 years in Talossa). When the King pointed out that the PC had clearly lost the support of a majority of Talossans, Frenette flew into a proprietary rage worthy of Louis XIV: *“What does your majority do for Talossa?”* “Martin-Pierre,” the King replied, “the majority **is** Talossa.”

5. Dan Lorentz urged the King to abdicate, expecting the rabble-rousers to lose interest without Ben to pick on. This possibility, actually hinted at in the MN’s programme, drew frantic rage from Ragsdale: *“Allowing the King to abdicate and enter politics would only make him more powerful, not less!”* Devin Burr shook his head in disbelief: “You are completely and utterly paranoid.”

6. Everything vital to Talossan identity, like *Ár Päts*, *The Berber Project*, and the nation’s enormous

language texts, was copyrighted in Ben Madison's name anyway, though nobody was naïve enough to think the white settlers would actually obey copyright laws. And under RT law, the National Archives, several thousand pages of materials laboriously collected since 1979, was Ben's personal property too; getting them back from Michael Pope took months of nail-biting, undercover, multilateral diplomacy, but ensured that loyal Talossans, not the PC party, would control their country's twenty-five year heritage, come what may (see picture).

7. Distancing the MN from the King (and kicking out Maxime Charbonneau for joking about guillotining Ragsdale), Burr called new elections for 15 May, to end on 14 June. Frenette tried to reprise his "secret election" strategy, "forgetting" to notify Vuode Senator Durnford that her seat was up for a vote. She was re-elected after an election schedule was discovered deep somewhere in the tunnels of Frenette's online database. When Ben emailed him to discuss matters privately, Frenette – the CEO of Cablan.net, an internet provider – published those mails on Wittenberg without permission, trying to provoke more public fighting. The PC applauded, Gruber sued Madison for "libel," and Frenette insisted that diabolical Ben was now hiring an army of shadowy "private investigators" to spy on everybody, a laughably dishonest story that became sillier, more elaborate, and more paranoid with each frenzied retelling.

8. On 2 May, backed by the PC and Gruber, Frenette fired Madison as Deputy SoS, replacing decades of law with radical new "election rules" making it hard for ordinary voters who weren't full-time politicians ("scum," to Yahn; "dead people," to Gruber) to vote. The Cort issued an injunction; Ragsdale accused Ben of "forging" it. The Cort ordered Frenette to count paper ballots; he ignored the order, refusing to count votes not "verified" by phone or email. Betrayed voters, on and off line, complained bitterly. Frenette told Francesco Felici that he needed a "password" to vote, then refused him a password on the grounds that an election was coming up. "Why not require a blood test and a note from my mother?" Ken Velméir exclaimed: "I will not be treated like a criminal in my own country!"

9. As the election began, the PC needed a Hitlerian "big lie" to justify its wild course of conduct, and the big lie they settled on was "vote fraud." Frenette insisted that brutal measures were needed, warning voters in all seriousness that Ben was plotting to send fake emails and impersonate their voices over the phone in order to cast fake votes for the MN, and offered *that* as his public rationale for firing him as Deputy SoS. Of course, Frenette could never actually cite a case of this happening. "This is so toxic and controlling," commented Brook Pànetà.

10. The Cort ruled that the OrgLaw did give Frenette virtually dictatorial powers to conduct an election, so Talossans chafed under a bizarre, new, paranoid system of literacy tests, fees, passwords, requirements to cast multiple votes, intrusive phone calls, and anything else he could dream up. "*I am the one dictating the rules!*" Frenette cackled. Velméir vowed to fight those rules through civil disobedience. "I cannot in good conscience participate in a process I find distasteful," he announced. "I think Martin-Pierre is a nutjob," warned Geoff Tomasüt.

11. When the election began on 15 May 2004, the MN ran on its core values of "citizenship, culture, reform, and fun." The PC made no effort at all to appear remotely popular or credible, virtually ignoring the MN and spamming voters with a turgid 50-page (!) screed of Jeff Ragsdale's hopelessly strident, poisoned invective vilifying Ben, his "corrupt" family and his "disgusting" wife. It almost seemed like

an ad campaign aimed at Penguineans rather than Talossans. (Little did anyone suspect.) The US-style negative campaign backfired badly. Amy ran a considerably more positive letter campaign on behalf of the MN, and the party picked up swing-votes like Brook Pànetâ, Daviu Foctéir, **Paola Cleri**, Albrec'ht Lupulardít, and Frédéric Coriü. In a sick effort to smear Ben's 80-year-old father, Frenette insinuated that Dr Harry Madison, who was present at Talossa's 1979 birth and a citizen since 1984, told him in a phone call that he (Harry) "didn't even know what Talossa was." "That's a great story," Harry laughed, taking it in stride. "I don't have that RT bumper sticker on my car, either."

12. Gruber flew into violent, homophobic rants against Talossa's Gay citizens, while his psychoses spawned yet more dippy conspiracy theories, accusing Ben of plotting with Gruber's ex-wife to kidnap Gruber's son in Florida. Gruber's own girlfriend voted against his party, while a former PCG member denounced Gruber as a "f*cking evil nutcase." The outrage of ordinary voters at Frenette's machinations (punctuated by a few calls to reinstate absolute monarchy!) was put best by sweet Paola Cleri of Maricopa: *"It is unfair that I'm not able to practise my democratic right to vote."* "I want to vote Black Hand," affirmed retired PM Frédéric Coriü, one of the swing voters who had voted PC in the previous election, "and in any case against the PC."

13. Frenette, Gruber and the PC had staked their reputation and legitimacy on the fatuous proposition that most of Talossa's voters weren't real people at all, but rather, fictitious identities invented or manipulated by the King. In one embarrassing episode, Jeff Ragsdale called and interrogated Dan Lorentz to try and find some way of proving he wasn't 'really' Dan Lorentz at all. Frenette, who appeared to all the world to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown, was embarrassed and horrified when those very legions of Talossan voters all turned out to be real people after all, using his own draconian rules to cast their own very real votes against him.

14. This awesome, inspiring democratic revolt, put on by Talossans who are not heard from often enough, meant that the Black Hand party had been pushed to the brink of outright victory with nearly a month of campaigning to go... *if* Frenette could be trusted to count all the votes, and *if* the PC would put country before party, obey the constitution Talossans had all agreed on, honour the legitimacy of the election, and accept the right of the Talossan people to choose their own leaders, rather than having the PC Party choose leaders for them. ●●●

År Päts, Part Fifty-Seven (May-June 2004) “Identity Theft”

“We will survive. We will flourish. We will prevail.”

1. In the middle of the election, King Robert and Queen Amy left Talossa for a long-planned visit to Europe and North Africa. With Postmaster General Márcüs Cantaloûr sworn in as Regent, the King and Queen met with Frédéric Corïu and Francesco Felici, and waved the red-and-green national flag at the island of Cézembre (picture). The spiritual highlight of their journey was a visit to Tunisia, finally setting foot in the “ancient Berber homeland” so dear to Talossa’s identity, and from which they mailed home postcards showing red and green Tunisian architecture.

2. Meanwhile, back home, voter outrage continued to build. “How could you give the country away to these people?” asked Jean Williams, about the PC. “If I call this number,” Geoff Tomasüt asked about Frenette’s “toll-free” election line, “I’m not going to get a \$4,000 phone bill from Sierra Leone, am I?” “I hope this is the last time I ever have to vote like this,” swore Enrici, filling out his ballot to Frenette’s arbitrary specifications.

3. On 1 June 2004, the King was out of the country; Regent Cantaloûr and PM Burr were both off-line for the day. It was at that moment that SoS Martin-Pierre Frenette, web domain squatter J.P. Griffin, and the bulk of the PC Party revealed what they thought of Talossa, the rule of law, copyrights, free speech and democracy. With polls predicting a lopsided MN victory, they launched the Great Theft. It was Talossa’s September 11th.

4. “My account on Witt has mysteriously vanished,” Gary Conâ reported by email. “This stinks to hell like retribution for voting MN.” Frenette had indeed cancelled almost everyone’s Wittenberg accounts and redirected Talossa’s official websites to his own long-prepared “Republic of Talossa” page. Six PC politicians, and five “pocket vote” hangers-on, proclaimed themselves the “real” RT, as opposed to nearly 40 citizens remaining in the Kingdom of Talossa, now shut out of their own websites but their historic continuity, national identity, and legal legitimacy untainted. “Some members of the PC just cannot stand to have the majority of the citizenry disagreeing with them,” was Marc Moisan’s trenchant and irrefutable rejoinder.

5. Learning of the traitors’ impeccable timing, Frédéric Corïu observed that the PC was behaving “just like a real African dictatorship.” PM Devin Burr was eloquent in Talossa’s gravest moment:

“Let me make it very clear that the only thing besides part of its web presence Talossa has lost is eleven citizens. Regardless of their grievances, they have acted illegally in their attempt to recreate Talossa in their own image. They have deserted you by taking what is yours, and claiming it is still yours only if you join with them. Our government is still fully functional, and the Government is working hard to alleviate some of the inconveniences that have been thrust upon us. I realize that many of you have friends who are involved. I’m not asking you to forsake those relationships, but I am urging you to carefully consider what has happened, and who is involved. The best and only way to resolve personal issues is to exert self-control. The best and only way to resolve legal issues is by using the instrument that we ourselves have created: the Organic Law. To achieve results by any other means cheapens the experience of being Talossan.”

6. Votes were counted on 14 June 2004. Outraged by Gruber’s violence, Frenette’s power-grabs, and

a decade of Tory arrogance, voters gave the MN a 122 seat majority (of 200). After two years as a minority protest party, the Black Hand won more Cybercit votes than the PC, plus 86% of the non-Cyber vote. Despite the PC's efforts to suppress turnout and rig the election, the real Talossa had clearly announced that it was alive and free to confront the awesome challenges of rebuilding and improving. It was the first time since 1990 that a non-PC party had won a majority of the vote.

7. Meanwhile, two founders of 1997's defunct "Penguinea" were still creepily obsessed, seven years later, with Talossa. Desperate for allies, the quitters joined them, and back up went Penguinea's websites, now using Talossa's domain name to denounce Talossa and "King Bobby F*cktard." The new "Republic of Talossa" (which Talossans branded "*Gruberia*") harassed Talossans by email, sent fictitious citizenship applications to gum up Talossa's bureaucracy, claimed they had somehow been "driven out of Talossa," and then claimed to *be* Talossa at the same time. "Every time I see the Republicans working themselves up in to a froth of self-congratulatory righteousness about what they did," Dan Lorentz wrote, "I remember that they unethically kept the Kingdom's domain names and I think: what hypocrites!" "You can't take dog poop and call it whipped cream," added Tomás Gariçéir. "We're the real Talossa."

8. Talossans took the high road, vowing to let these neo-Penguineans go the way of all things. With the King thousands of miles away (and barely aware of what happened; he found out in a cybercafé in Versailles), the nation rallied brilliantly without him. In the face of the crisis, an intact, bipartisan Uppermost Cort — Ken Velméir and John Yahn — ruled the quitters were no longer Talossans. Pete Hottelet rebuilt Wittenberg within days of the Great Theft, and Senäts vacancies were filled through by-elections, filling the upper chamber with a host of loominaries: Amy Durnford, Brook Pànetà, Francesco Felici, Wes Enrici, Márcüs Cantaloûr, Dan Lorentz, and Pete Hottelet. Talossa's homepage was soon up an running on a new domain name funded by Geoff Tomasüt. John Yahn dissolved the PC in June and retired from politics, for now.

9. PM Devin Burr was burned out and thoroughly demoralized by the whole affair, and turned increasingly bitter and negative. He resigned for personal reasons. In a move that once would have seemed absurd, but which seemed just right for this moment, Regent Márcüs Cantaloûr asked Gary Conâ to assume the office of Prime Minister of Talossa. He was sworn in by telephone as Talossa's thirtieth Prime Minister on 17 June 2004. *"I am under no illusions about how difficult this time will be,"* PM Conâ told his fellow-Talossans in his first speech as PM. *"For now, my concern is to get the Kingdom back together. I regret that my inexperience will cause this process to go slower than it ought to, but I promise you all, it will be done. We will survive, we will flourish, we will prevail."* ●●●

År Päts, Part Fifty-Eight (June 2004-February 2005)
“The Napoleonic Era”

“No foe nor villain can your love of country rend.”

1. “Talossa chooses to express and identify itself through the majority vote of its lawful citizens, and through its national institutions as defined in the Organic Law,” declared King Robert, back on native soil to survey the damage from the terrorist attack of June 1st. “No group other than this nation has the right to call itself Talossa. If the separatist group wants to have their own micronation, more power to them – as long as they don’t usurp our good name.”

2. The PC’s internet-based Great Theft was a deeply demoralizing event for Talossans who had worked so hard, for 25 years, to build a law-governed, democratic society of friends. Nothing prepared Talossans for what the PC did to Talossa in 2003-2004. So putting the pieces back together, just by having fun again, was a major objective of PM Gary Conâ’s 2004 TalossaFest. As they had almost every summer since Tom Buffone began the tradition in 1989, Talossans gathered on Sunday, 22 August 2004, for a very happy TalossaFest. Conâ hosted Brook Pànetâ, Geoff Tomasüt, Wes Enrici, John Yahn, Tomás Gariçêir, and Ben Madison, while others joined in by phone. Participants agreed the most important issue facing the RT was immigration. Plans were made to simplify the citizenship requirements, as a way to draw in more prospectives.

3. A Living Cosâ, held that day, enacted landmark reforms in provincial and senatorial elections (frequent venues for corruption under the PC one-party state). “*Stand Tall, Talossans*” was chosen as the national anthem. Its stirring words, written years ago, were now especially appropriate: “*Stand tall, Talossans, the peninsula defend. No foe nor villain can your love of country rend. Raise high your banner, your passion penned unto: Loyal to our sovereign, let our minds and hearts be true.*” Tomás Gariçêir replaced Acting SoS Marc Moisan as Secretary of State on 2 September. Busy awaiting the birth of his first child, he worked with Ben on a new Talossan dictionary. The King, naïve and inclusive as always, nominated Dan (“destroy Talossa”) Lorentz to fill the vacancy on the Uppermost Cort.

4. The Talossan Wargaming Association, made up of Ben Madison and Wes Enrici, published its first professional wargame in July: *Byzantium Reborn*, a simulation of warfare in Turkey in the 1920s. In October, Britain’s University of Sunderland featured old volumes of *Stotanneu* and other historic Talossan flags and artifacts in a well-publicized exhibition; the gallery furnished the Kingdom with a complete choral recording of *Stand Tall, Talossans*. And on 10 October 2004, most Talossans felt that life had indeed returned to normal when **Al Chelêir**, a prospective citizen from Oklahoma, was naturalized by law as the Kingdom’s newest Cybercit.

5. The MN-dominated Ziu was not the body of docile Ben-puppets the critics expected. It was no secret that the King sought to abdicate and hand his duties to someone else. The MN platform said as much, as did his 2003 decision to renounce party ties and leave the Ziu. But monarchists like Márcüs Cantaloûr and a new rising star, Brazilian **Xhorxh Asmoûr**, eloquently insisted that Talossa’s legitimacy, at least in part, came from Ben’s heritage as a Talossan since 1979. In October the Ziu voted down Ben’s elective regency bill, seen as a back-door effort to shake off the crown. Still, it confirmed **Prince Louis Adam**, Amy’s seven-year-old grandson and an heir of the Counts of Rouergue, as the King’s legal heir, should anything happen to Ben.

6. Meanwhile, US politics were having their normal destructive impact on Talossa as John Yahn, muted since the PC's breakup, reverted to the extreme-right politics of his adolescence. Yahn was finding it harder and harder to reconcile his US nationalism with his RT citizenship; especially with most of his Republican friends now in the "Republic." When Democrat John Kerry lost the presidential race in November, a nerdy debate ensued about election laws in Germany. Yahn sneeringly condemned anyone *"who finds America 'inferior' to foreign countries."* Blasting *"the roots of 'Talossa'"* [sic] as *"anti-American,"* he also quit his Cort seat after only a year. With intended irony, it was filled by Marc Moisan, a Canadian-Talossan liberal, the first Justice ever to hail from outside the US. He joined Lorentz and Velméir to form the most left-leaning Cort in RT history. And when Ben funded a new set of oval RT nationality bumper stickers, Yahn refused to put one on his car. *"I am not an 'RT.' I am an American!"* he bellowed in one angry exchange.

7. Yahn might have drifted out of Talossa completely, had the King not invited a long-time mutual friend to join the Kingdom in December. **Fritz Buchholtz**, a right-wing Milwaukee-area businessman and owner of Napoleon's, joined Talossa. Fritz had flitted on the periphery of Talossa for decades. Crippled by diabetes and barely able to walk, Fritz was also suffering from a failing business and a bitter divorce which he blamed on his wife being Jewish. He made his store available as a base for RT operations, but also set up a **Conservative Loyalist Party**, hoping to revive the Right and draw Yahn out of his isolation. But with no real experience in Talossa, Buchholtz fell under Yahn's spell. Yahn never really believed that the PC had done anything wrong in setting up Gruberia, and saw Talossa as an internet chat room full of his friends rather than a community for which one could have "patriotic" loyalty. This became the CLP's ethos, which regarded any right-wing "pro-American" Gruberian foreigners as its allies and any Talossan patriots as foes.

8. History repeated itself. In 1997 when the Penguineans quit, Talossans should have rallied around their own flag and ignored them. Instead, "Liberals" like Johan Anglemark took their side, and the result was years of fratricidal broil inside Talossa egged on by non-Talossans. This led to the 2004 "Republican" Gruberia split-off, which was joined by several of the ex-Penguineans and their friends. Unfortunately, when the "Republicans" left in 2004, the situation was identical. CLP sympathizers and allies like Yahn, Dan Lorentz, and Devin Burr took their side. Just like 1997, the result was more domestic conflict inside Talossa, instead of the unity that should have prevailed. Especially galling was that these critics called themselves "conservatives" and "loyalists," when they wouldn't dare rally loyally around their own flag or conservatively defend their own country.

9. Rumours of Gruberian moderation were greeted with hope from the King and MN. But the quitters vowed egotistically that they would "never" rejoin Talossa so long as Ben Madison, his family, any of his friends, or anyone who agreed with him, was allowed to vote. That, of course, was pretty much everybody, so the hoped-for reconciliation fizzled out. A New Zealand ISP and web giant Geocities took steps to stop them from illegally posting and distributing copyrighted Talossan materials. But it was hard to stamp out every internet troll who was plagiarizing and forging Talossan documents in order to break laws, defraud people, steal the Kingdom's identity, and rob loyal citizens of the fruit of thousands of hours of their own work on behalf of Talossa.

10. Beset by a lousy work schedule, Gary Conâ limped quietly to the end of his six-month term in December in the face of a rash of dissenting votes on the VOC, disappointing everybody by lashing out at critics who expected some official response to the recent Indonesian tsunami disaster. The Ziu

adopted legal checks and balances to prevent the SoS from arbitrarily dictating election rules, and clarified the use of Talossan-language names, a growing issue as more and more citizens, new and old, opted to use Talossan names on the internet for privacy reasons.

11. Sunday, 26 December 2004, was the 25th anniversary of Talossa's 1979 birth. Commemorative issues of *Stotanneu* were mailed out. In his Throne Speech, the King declared: *"Talossa was a great deal of innocent fun, once upon a time, a home for high-school kids and language geeks, because it was trying to be an antidote to the wider culture, not embrace it."* Joining Pànetà and others who bemoaned the "incivility" of US politics, the King apologized for letting RT politics deteriorate in the years before the Great Theft: *"I failed to see the warning signs, and I let you all down by not doing the one thing a King is supposed to do best: be Defender of the Faith."* And he reiterated the core of his Talossan faith: *"This is everything and the only thing Talossa is supposed to be about: Good Clean Fun."* He extended his hand to the quitters, but noted that since the split, more people had joined Talossa than in the year leading up to it. "We don't deserve to have them back unless we do Talossa right this time."

12. Gruberia answered with a lone, pathetic post on Wittenberg begging Talossans to quit.

13. Elections began in January, 2005. A new generation of RT politicians was eager to play in the country's post-PC democracy. The MN chose the eternally patient Márcüs Cantaloûr (a citizen since 1996) for PM, while Marc Moisan took over the ZPT. Buchholtz's CLP contested as well. Lorentz ran a tiny One Talossa Party (OTP) calling for reconciliation with those whom Asmoûr dismissed as the "fussers." Reflecting on the legacy of PC rule, every major party called itself "positive" or "constructive." With new Senäts and provincial elections in the mix, and four active parties to choose from, the election of 14 February 2005 was marked by joy and optimism, Talossan-style. Most of the 29 votes cast were on on paper ballots, a throwback to the "good old days" when Talossans connected to their government in "real," non-internet ways. The MN held a narrow 108 seats majority, again with strong leftist support. The CLP united the Right to win second place with 56; the ZPT took 32 and Dan won only 4. The 83% turnout was a barometer of public feeling. Talossans felt the pieces were finally back in place to make Talossa fun again.

14. What fools! ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Fifty-Nine (February-June 2005)
“Bush Administration Recognizes Talossa”

“Fritz signed me up, but it sounds too weird for me.”

1. On 15 February 2005 MN leader Márcüs Cantaloûr, a Talossan since 1996, was sworn in by phone as Talossa’s 31st Prime Minister: *“I would like to personally thank all Talossans who were willing to give the MN another strong mandate. All parties ran solid campaigns based squarely on issues and no one engaged in the ugly, personal attacks which so often tarnish the image of politics. My office will always be open for citizens. I would love to hear from you on a regular basis. Communication is the key to good governance.”*

2. Voters no longer saw the MN as the party that had to ‘save the nation from the PC’ and the MN lost seats. In Mussolini, a shocked Senator Wes Enrici (MN) was ousted by Tom Buffone (TLFN). Elections held in the RT’s seven provinces laid the groundwork for revitalizing provincial government.

3. Talossan publicity continued. Talossa was featured in an Estonian men’s magazine with Alyssa Milano, not King Robert I, on the cover. Ben purchased hundreds of oval “RT” bumper stickers, to replace those stolen by Gruberians; the 2005 TalossaFest featured six cars with RT stickers. Fiery Dragon, a Canadian firm, republished *Byzantium Reborn* while Schutze Games put out *Death in the Trenches*, a World War I game designed by Enrici and Madison.

4. In February of 2005, Ben set up a monthly “Immigration Day” intended to be a regular part of the Kingdom’s social calendar, where local Talossans could meet and introduce the Kingdom to local prospectives. An early visitor was Fritz’s friend **Greg Rajala**, a college professor and soon a CLP Member of the Cosâ. But the euphoria faded when Talossa’s local hub, Napoleon’s, closed its doors due to lagging sales. The flag, flying there since January, was hauled down to the strains of *Stand Tall, Talossans*, on the last Immigration Day held there, on 13 March. A Living Cosâ held that day revived the “What Talossa Means to Me” Essay for immigrants and established Armistice Day (11 November) as an RT public holiday to honour veterans.

5. Few knew, but the RT government had been hard at work for a year securing legal recognition from the USA. On 19 April 2005, Wittenberg announced: *“Bush Administration Recognizes Talossa!”* The US granted a trademark on the word “Talossa” to King Robert I. This gave Talossans the sole legal authority to use the word “Talossa” for publicity, identity, and commerce. While not quite an exchange of ambassadors, it was the first time America acknowledged Talossa’s existence, declaring us the sole legitimate Talossa, and branding competitors as criminals under US and international law. Talossa’s registration as a non-profit corporation in Wisconsin added legitimacy to the RT’s claims. Ominously, no one in the CLP thanked the King for winning the trademark or spending more than \$500 to do so. Instead, their reaction was that trademarking the name would only inflame the quitters. John Yahn shot back: *“OK. And, ummm, what about **enforcement** of such a provision?”* And they shot down every attempt to enforce it. Why?

6. In April an MN proposal to abolish the Three Strikes Law provoked a national debate. The bill failed, but it left lingering questions about who should be Talossan. The Ziu passed a ZPT bill to relax immigration laws. Many prospectives had been scared away by stringent photo I.D. requirements enacted after the 2004 schism. Immigration Minister Cantaloûr dealt with several fake applicants for RT

citizenship (called “Partholons” after the fake first name of one such ‘applicant’) who appeared out of nowhere once Gruberia was created. But as long as Cantaloûr was Immigration Minister, there was no danger that the phonies would be granted citizenship.

7. But after the CLP’s Fritz Buchholtz became Immigration Minister, the CLP took up the old PC party line, bashing inactive MN voters as “pocket votes” while defending the “civil rights” of inactive CLP voters. In fact, inactive people were now swelling the population rolls. Talossans were routinely greeted with posts from Buchholtz, announcing that some mysterious new citizen was approved. Their entry essays were usually short and cryptic. Though nobody pressed the issue, they were all illegal. Citizenship law required each applicant’s approval not only by the Immigration Minister but by the PM and Opposition Leader. But in the “happy” climate of rebuilding Talossa after the Great Theft, people decided to wait before forcing the issue.

8. Population growth led the Ziu, in May, to tweak immigration law to spread the newcomers more evenly among the RT’s provinces. It approved the PM’s bills creating a heraldic council and a table of precedence for social functions. An amendment, adding Talossa’s corporation status to the Organic Law, passed unanimously but a second bill, acknowledging the King as holding the trademark, was defeated by the CLP: another in a series of ominous signs.

9. As spring turned to summer, the non-CLP parties found themselves overstretched, with several of their appointments, made to get people active, failing to vote. Tom Buffone lost his Senäts seat and Gary Conâ (ZPT) replaced him. Hottelet lost his Senäts seat in Maricopa, and Lorentz lost his Cosâ seats. But the government continued to enjoy broad support, winning the June, 2005 vote of confidence by a vote of 132-0 with support from the MN, CLP and ZPT.

10. The immigration mystery, meanwhile, kept growing. Talossans noticed that few of the “new citizens” ever answered emails. Why would they join and then not participate? In early July Ben Madison had a strange and ominous phone call. Inviting all new citizens to TalossaFest, Ben called **Gary Hawkins**, one of Fritz’s new Talossans. Hawkins declined the invite, then asked Ben what Talossa was! *“Fritz signed me up but it sounds too weird for me,”* he told Ben. And yet Hawkins was a citizen. Like Hawkins, a disproportionate number of newbies, and not just Fritz’s friends, were joining the CLP. But when the ZPT accused Fritz of using the Immigration office to recruit new members for his party, Ben Madison still could not bring himself to distrust his old friend, and pooh-poohed the implications and alleged illegality of the naturalizations. Nobody knew it, but it was the biggest mistake of Ben’s long and storied Talossan career. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Sixty (June-August 2005) “Night of the Nazis”

“Talossa grew way beyond [fun] quite some time ago.”

1. While he was serving as Talossa’s controversial Immigration Minister, Fritz Buchholtz was arrested on 16 June 2005 for stealing books from the public library in Mequon, Wisconsin. He pleaded guilty to the crime. It was a bizarre event, and one which would come to define an era in Talossan history. Was Buchholtz trying to steal a country too?

2. A week later, faithful to his historic role as roving do-gooder and publicist for Talossa, Ben Madison flew to New York City to attend the opening at the Andrew Kreps Gallery in Chelsea of an art exhibition on micronations (picture). The show featured old hand-written issues of *Stotannen*, the RT crown, passports, and historic artifacts. Asked by an informed stranger “which Talossa” he belonged to, Ben replied that he belonged to the Kingdom, established in 1979. “Good,” the man replied. “Because those other guys sound like a bunch of jerks.” When Ben recounted this story on Wittenberg, the CLP denounced him for criticizing Gruberia (or rather, letting some informed New Yorker criticize Gruberia). It was yet another sign of what was coming.

3. Talossans met on 9 July 2005 for the annual TalossaFest. Brook Pànetâ, a veteran of virtually every such festival held since 1989, described the atmosphere as “stilted” and “emotionally cold.” Two CLP members actually showed up in Nazi t-shirts, and after the close of Living Cosâ business, Buchholtz cranked up the stereo to blast Nazi marches through the house. PM Cantaloûr and ZPT leader Marc Moisan phoned in while the King, Durnford, Yahn, Enrici, Pànetâ, Conâ, and Buchholtz and several of his friends, attended. “*TalossaFest*,” the PM announced, “*reminds me of the fact that Talossa is a real community. As important as the ‘online connexion’ may be, Talossa is about friendship and striving together to create a better world.*” The RT national anthem was played for the first and last time, and a Living Cosâ was held. Steps were taken to reopen Talossa’s bank account and raise operating funds.

4. But on other issues, the CLP dominated the proceedings with anger. Bitterly bashing Cantaloûr as a “mindless puppet” of the King, they voted for him almost unanimously on the VOC. The CLP proposed a bill to ban opposition parties, which flew in the face of 20 years of RT democratic tradition and was voted down by the MN and ZPT. When the MN however proposed banning overtly subversive parties, the CLP mustered the votes to defeat the bill. The MN backed a CLP scheme to create a ‘non-biased’ joint history of 2004’s Gruberian split; then CLP members voted down their own bill. A bill to advise the attorney general on the trademark was also defeated; its CLP-led opponents felt the bill was “insulting” to the Gruberians since it called their use of the trademarked name Talossa “*unauthorized*”. And as a pointless poke in the eye to Talossan patriotism, the CLP did its best to defeat a harmless “pledge of affection” for Talossa’s 25-year-old flag. The MN and ZPT were horrified by the CLP’s anti-flag posturing and their soft stance on the quitters. When the Nazi music and Hitler memorabilia started to flow, many participants went home early. “The Nazi stuff weirded me out,” Pànetâ recalled.

5. Afterwards, Fritz, without warning, suddenly started an online flame war by accusing the King of abusing his right to grant clemency to those who had lost their citizenship via the “Three Strikes Law.” He implied that the King would nefariously use this power to flood the country with ex-Talossan “pocket votes” for the MN. (Evidently, anyone with *any* historic roots in Talossa was looked at an

automatic vote against the CLP.) “This back door method of getting around the immigration procedure simply adds fuel to the fire about an unfair advantage,” he wrote. “With your constant attacks on the CLP and support from Márcus Cantaloûr you might as well be the Black Hand’s front man.” Typically, Fritz himself had been publicly encouraging the King to invite these very people back into the country – and the King had not actually invited any of them back, precisely for fear of antagonizing the CLP.

6. Predictably, the ever-compromising King offered to make clemency automatic for those who wanted it, removing the King’s discretion from the process and giving the CLP what it wanted. The CLP denounced the bill and voted it down. Denounce the King for “abusing” his powers, then vote against reducing them: it was the same make-an-enemy strategy that Dan Lorentz had pursued for years. And when the CLP demanded that Ben resign as Secretary of State, Ben offered to resign. Not only did the Cosâ vote to ask Ben to remain in office, but it did so with unanimous CLP support! This ritual double-talk convinced the ZPT and the MN that it was pointless to work with, or even talk to, a party that existed only to cause conflict.

7. In July and August, the CLP escalated tensions by letting loose a new barrage against the King and the Organic Law. Calling for a figurehead king like Britain, the CLP demanded not only that the King’s right to propose bills be abolished, but that Ben Madison be personally banned from expressing political opinions in public. Under their banner of *“We Are The Future,”* the CLP let it be known that Ben’s ideas and views would be irrelevant, perhaps illegal, in their Talossa.

8. Meanwhile, Rajala famously denounced Talossa as “not a democracy” because voters could elect sitting MC’s to the Senäts. This soon turned into a general CLP attack on the entire Senäts, which they called “undemocratic” because (inspired by the American system) Senators had to be citizens for two years, with some experience and perspective on RT affairs. Only two CLP members had been citizens more than a year, and the party frothed with the enthusiasm of the new, the confidence of the inexperienced, and the credibility of those who had never been tested by responsibility. The RT’s venerable Senäts was just one more obstruction to be demolished.

9. The siege on Talossa’s constitution and values turned personal when the CLP attacked Senator Amy Durnford, charging her with “conflicts of interest” simply because she was married to Ben. Vuode’s foolish voters should not be allowed to elect Amy to public office. Such assaults on the Senäts told Talossans that the CLP was simply uninterested in “Talossa” as an existing society. They wanted to replace everybody. No wonder they opposed Ben holding the trademark. Amy asked Talossans to remember that Talossa was created in 1979 in order to be fun: “Remember why Talossa was started in the first place!” The CLP response, from Devin Burr, was telling: *“Talossa grew way beyond that quite some time ago.”* “Well,” Amy replied, “the MN still thinks Talossa should be fun. For crying out loud get that bug out of your butt, Devin!”

10. While the CLP continued to warn of “conflicts of interest” (all involving the MN, the King, and his family), PM Cantaloûr pointed out a real conflict of interest involving the CLP. A number of CLP office-holders in Talossa were rumoured to be registered members of Martin-Pierre Frenette’s online “Republic.” The PM vowed that any members of the MN who joined the quitters would be expelled from his party, and he pointedly challenged the ZPT and the CLP to do likewise. The ZPT responded positively, with Gary Conâ declaring: “If the CLP cannot pledge to not let ‘republicans’ be members of their party, to bar them from any sort of influence in our politics, then they are leaving the door open

for more treachery.” This issue, more than any other, forced battle lines to be drawn. The ZPT and MN, along with the large majority of actual Talossans, were on one side, while the CLP was on the other – plus all those mysterious, silent email accounts that Fritz Buchholtz and John Yahn considered “citizens.”

11. Rumours that the CLP leaders were in bed with the traitorous Gruberians led to yet another firestorm in RT politics. On 13 August, instead of denying the rumours, Buchholtz vigorously defended the right of CLP members to be simultaneously full-fledged citizens of Gruberia, on the grounds of “free speech.” Unbelievably, Fritz’s friend **John Woolley** managed to push that scandal onto the back page when he admitted, the very same day, that the CLP actually had a “policy” of inviting ignorant foreigners into Talossa for the sole purpose of joining and voting for the CLP and voting the original Talossans out of power. But how many of the new “phony votes” *were* CLP members? The CLP would not answer. Fritz declared that CLP membership records were “secret,” and no Talossan was allowed to know who was in the party.

12. For a nation that relied on trust and openness, this was the fatal blow. The controversy over secret lists thrust into the open the illegal conduct of Fritz Buchholtz as Immigration Minister. Under RT law, the Minister had to act “*in consultation with the Government and with the Opposition Leader*,” as well as (Article XII, Section 5 of the Organic Law) “*in consultation with the Uppermost Cort*,” before granting anyone citizenship. The obvious rationale was to prevent a rogue Immigration Minister from declaring citizens without the consent of the government. After all, no one wanted some rogue, unsupervised politician “packing” Talossa full of his own friends and supporters.

13. But over the past months, Talossans had awakened, day after day, to discover “new citizens” registered by the Immigration Minister. In virtually every case, the *modus operandi* was the same. The PM and Cort were never consulted on these “citizenships”. But in a climate of public trust, few thought, until it was too late, that anything untoward was happening. But when the CLP suggested that every single one of these silent, mysterious, uncontactable, so-called “citizens” like Gary Hawkins was a registered member of the CLP, it all sadly became clear. ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Sixty-One (August 2005-July 2007)
“Fighting and Stealing and Crap”

“Those people are really destroying the glorious name of our country.”

1. The reaction was predictable and negative. But the very negativity of it all – more fighting, on top of fighting – led to the next step. On 15 August 2005, the founder of Talossa, King Robert I, announced on Wittenberg that he was abdicating as King and renouncing his allegiance to the illegally-operating Talossan government, leaving Amy’s eight year old grandson Louis as King. Most felt it was a publicity stunt, but Ben Madison, Talossa’s founder, was serious this time. Ben, and many others, honestly no longer wanted to gag on Talossan politics the way the extreme right insisted they be played. Ben packed the National Archives away in french fry boxes (picture).

2. “For me,” Ben wrote, “Talossa has become nothing but constant bickering, fighting, and backbiting. Sure, I could return and stage some brilliant comeback, using all my legal tools and talents to undo the illegal citizenships foisted upon us and probably win the election, but that would really, in the end, solve nothing. For if anything is clear to us now, nothing is ever ‘solved’ in Talossa. In August of 2005, we are still fighting the same battle with Penguinia that we were fighting in August of 1997. I realize, virtually nobody in the CLP has any idea what I’m talking about – but those who do not know history are truly damned to repeat it, and are literally repeating it even now. I am tired of fighting the same battle for eight long and boring years.”

3. Ben’s wife joined him. “All this fighting and stealing and crap, if this is what Talossa is all about then I don’t want to be a part of it,” Amy wrote. “Fritz, I am disappointed at how you’ve been acting. I thought you would be a good member. I feel betrayed. Ben said Talossa was too much money and too much time and all for nothing. That isn’t true, it was fun while it lasted, but some people have to ruin it for everybody else. It started last year with the quitters and now it’s the same sh*t just coming from our own people.”

4. With the creator of the Talossan language gone, language guru Tomás Gariçéir renounced his citizenship as well, denouncing Ben for somehow perpetuating the battle with the quitters by refusing to allow them access to the yet-unpublished new Talossan language dictionary.

5. The same day – 15 August 2005 – Prime Minister Márcüs Cantaloûr, a citizen of Talossa since 1996, announced that he too was leaving. “I have come to the sad conclusion that I simply cannot remain as a citizen of Talossa. The CLP will not stop with their attacks, and I do not wish to be a part of Talossa with the direction that they will take the Kingdom. I love Talossa, and it will always remain a part of my life. Maybe in the future I will be able to return. Please stay in touch, and I would love to help with any cultural and historical work for Talossa.”

6. Book-thief Buchholtz, who eagerly pumped TalossaFest full of Nazi music and propaganda, replied with undiluted venom. *“If wishes were horses beggars would ride. Do your duty as the head of your party and your country. To abandon them when they need you most tells a story about you that words cannot say.”* There was no soul-searching, no offer to resign, no call for the Cort or some other neutral body to investigate the illegal immigrants scandal, no effort to compromise, no hope that the hemorrhage would stop. Every MN or ZPT supporter that left made CLP control of Talossa more likely, which was all the CLP was after. To

steal and control a lifeless, electronic husk was better than sharing power in a living and diverse nation. CLP members gloated over the departures. Rajala wrote: *“The vision of government as seen by a new party has been viewed as an affront to Talossan politics and government by the former King and a few short-sighted office holders who basically served as sycophants to the King and primarily served their own narrow wishes for favor and power!”*

7. These “few short-sighted office-holders” actually consisted of some thirty people: six of seven Senators, two-thirds of the Uppermost Cort, six provincial premiers, every user of the Talossan language, the King, and every last citizen (save three – Lorentz, Yahn, and Burr) who had been a Talossan for more than nine months.

8. Cort Justice Ken Velméir, citizen since 1996 and the last of the original Cybercits, renounced. Deputy PM Xhorxh Asmoûr – absent since the sudden death of his fiancée – renounced (“I quit!”), reconsidered, and drifted away. Buchholtz proclaimed himself “Prime Minister,” despite the fact that Wes Enrici’s MN still held a majority in the Cosâ. Fritz named Woolley, a friend of his from Denver, as the new SoS. The openly Hitler-admiring CLP party now called itself “Talossa,” but what they ruled was a new micronation built on illegal immigrants and neo-Nazis. Real Talossans themselves looked bewildered at the new concoction and called it “Fritzland.”

9. “I see no choice but to renounce my citizenship officially,” wrote **Catrinâ Furxhéir**, a swing-voter since 2003 who helped create the Talossan language database. “It’s a shame it had to end this way and I wish that I could have stayed involved longer, but what happens, happens. All we can do is live and learn and move on.” Senator Francesco Felici, a Talossan since 1997 and the last fluent Talossan-speaker in Talossa, renounced as well: “Those people are really destroying the glorious name of our country and since the creation of the fake Talossa the peaceful magic of our world was practically over. Yes, maybe it’s time to move on. Talossa will always live in our hearts, in *our* hearts and not in the hands of crazies, thieves and psychopaths who do not deserve it. It’s much better a formally dead Talossa (but alive in our hearts and souls!) than a Talossa continuously hurt and offended by such people. This is not my Talossa anymore.”

10. As Talossa continued to hemorrhage talent, Woolley ambitiously gerrymandered the country, redistributing citizens and illegally naming non-citizens to various provinces to inflate the number of seats the CLP would win. “Some newcomers,” declared Cort Justice Marc Moisan, “feel that Talossa should be a community of names with very few active citizens. Indeed, some wish to increase the number of dandelions and non-voting citizens but on the other hand long time citizens are leaving faster than ever before.” ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Sixty-Two (August 2005-2007)
“When Everything Collapsed”

“Talossa has lost its spark.”

1. “Ben may not be completely right, but he is *far* from wrong,” announced Gary Conâ (picture), leader of the ZPT, in a blistering attack on the CLP:

“The CLP’s operating procedures run counter to the Talossan traditions of honesty, openness, and accountability. It represents nothing more than naked aggression, power hunger, and underhanded manoeuvres. It is extremely disquieting that NeoNazism is finding a new and growing constituency in the CLP. A featured ‘entertainment’ at TalossaFest was the playing of an audio recording of SS officers taking their service oath, avidly listened to by at least three people present. This is the sort of true devotion to a cause that belongs only to dyed-in-the-wool fanatics. And casts a more sinister light on their political aggression. These are the people the CLP is attracting. It may even be the keystone of their recruiting base. Is this what you want to associate yourself with, Talossa?”

2. Even **Matthew Cain**, a CLP “pocket vote,” declared: “Seeing where Talossa’s gone in these past few months, I have lost interest in it. That said, I am renouncing my citizenship as well.”

3. Some still hoped that the MN would challenge the CLP’s illegal citizens. Indeed, Justice Moisan lent support to these efforts. A grand Cort case might kick out the illegal immigrants and allow real Talossans to elect their own government. But the prevailing feeling was one of disgust: What would “victory” mean? Only more fighting; a permanently untrustworthy CLP would still be scheming, the permanently rabid Gruberians outside Talossa would still be plagiarizing. And like Corvair, Thalidomide, and Zyklon-B, the “brand name” of “Talossa” itself now looked like it had been permanently discredited, impossible to speak without remembering some hideous consequence.

4. Moisan sadly agreed. On 31 August, he too renounced his citizenship, leaving Dan Lorentz as self-avowed Cort and Regent. “I joined Talossa at a time where I sought an activity that could procure me with entertainment as well as a sense of accomplishment,” Marc wrote. “I have been privileged to count myself as a citizen of a micronation that will most certainly remain a part of world history. But I no longer find enjoyment in Talossa; this is not something new, I have felt that way for a while. Truthfully, Talossa has lost its spark, nearly everyone has hidden agendas and few have the interest of the Talossan community at heart.”

5. The CLP government lumbered on, in a sort of Last-Days-of-Pompeii sleepwalk, blithely oblivious to the fact that people with years of experience, long-term Talossans, indeed every single person outside the CLP, regarded Fritz’s agenda as so deeply dishonest and unethical that belonging to Talossa was pointless in the face of it. The vast majority of Talossans were kind, friendly, decent people, and what Talossa had become was irrelevant to them.

6. It was clear that much more was going on beyond simple illegal immigration. When Ben left in August, he took down the immigration site – yet floods of “new citizens” still knew how to contact Fritz directly. Suspicious names like “Dr. Gold Ferrari” were among the new “citizens” and “CLP members.” Women were “applying for citizenship” in numbers out of all proportion to Talossa’s long experience with gender imbalance. Who were these people? Nobody knew, and it was that sense of not knowing,

of belonging to a “Talossa” that was a completely different land from what it had been six months earlier, that convinced the real Talossans to stand aside for the time being.

7. Talossa had become another country. Its heart was gone. New barbarian rulers had no institutional memory. Ben Madison, Frédéric Coriù, Brook Pànetà, Gary Swedenborg, Geoff Tomasüt, Márcüs Cantaloûr, Pete Hottelet, Albrec’ht Lupulardít, Francesco Felici, Daviù Foctéir... now only names on unread pages, replaced by dozens of dead email accounts called “citizens.” On 2 September, the ZPT expired when Gary Conà, who stood in Ben’s living room on 26 December 1979 to witness Talossa’s birth, quit Fritz’s farce. “Talossa is just not fun any more,” he wrote:

“King Robert I has been a master of manipulating the system, and in my opinion, it typically worked out for the best, even in the bad old days when his uninvolved father was Senator. Talossa may have been corrupt, but it was benevolently so. Now, first the talossa dot com crowd, and then the CLP, have manipulated the system with more efficiency and ruthlessness than Ben himself. The King has always been a lightning rod, and the fulcrum point of many differences in opinion. He was a major attraction, and an occasional repellent. But he was the Kingdom. You can’t have a Kingdom without a King. The Kingdom is functionally dead. Let it die. Consider this my renunciation. And remove the ZPT from the ballots, if it was there; with both Mr. Moisan and I gone, the ZPT has zero membership. Not that it would matter, given how thoroughly the CLP has stacked the electoral deck.”

8. The remaining Cort Justice, Dan Lorentz, somehow resurfaced as Regent on 5 September:

“I do not fully understand what is happening. It seems – frankly – lacking in trust, torn by rancor, laced with foulness. Which, unfortunately, is just a longer way to say ‘Talossa’ these days. If, however, you are willing to trust my sense of loyalty to my long connection to Talossa, and you want to follow the laws of the Kingdom, then I am willing to help – at least until the upcoming elections are concluded. Understand this: a large part of my motivation to fulfill my Talossan obligations is born of a desire to pay tribute to Ben Madison, my brilliant, peerlessly creative, peerlessly exasperating – sometimes insufferable! – friend (with whom I disagree more often than not), the inventor and animating spirit of Talossa: one of the world’s weirder and oddly compelling things.”

9. The CLP replied to Lorentz’s overtures with unrestrained political sneering, though in light of his decades-old “I want to destroy Talossa” agenda, they need not have sneered. “The rancor and foulness that you sense can and will be overcome,” pontificated Rajala. “There are elections on the way. I interpret the recent abdication of the King and renunciation of citizenships by only a few, to be an attempt to scuttle the elections and drive away those who have become Talossan citizens who have had only the best intentions for Talossa at heart!” On 6 September Fritz announced “a parting of the ways” in Talossa, meaning the removal of nearly every citizen who was a part of Talossa before 2005. This massive purge was “the decision of the CLP Board.” Lorentz agreed with this agenda.

10. The CLP’s haughty dismissal of all these heartbroken renunciations as selfish political stunts, pushed Enrici over the edge too. On 8 September, brandishing affidavits from Cantaloûr and Moisan, Enrici presented a wordy but incisive lawsuit to the Cort, charging Buchholtz with corruption in his tenure as Immigration Minister, and branding every single one of Fritz’s thirty-plus “immigrants” to be non-citizens. There were compelling legal grounds for this claim, not the least of which was Fritz’s refusal to share any information about the “citizens” with the PM, Opposition Leader, or Cort, the only institutions responsible for overseeing immigration.

11. The suit drove the CLP government into mad paroxysms. They claimed the affidavits were “forged” (by Ben, of course), then promised “inevitable perjury trials” against every witness. On 9 September Buchholtz retroactively changed all the citizenship laws to legalize the phony citizens after the fact, thus depriving the Cort of any legal grounds on which to prosecute him. Lorentz declared weirdly that he was reluctant to rule against the CLP, for fear that they would break off and form yet a third online “Talossa,” as if that had any bearing on immigration law.

12. On September 11th, the CLP stated that it was removing the MN from the ballot. Rajala declared that he would not deposit any cheques in the official RT bank account, preferring to set up his own “official” account. The CLP’s double-talk continued and it let the MN register; but with voter rolls full of illegal immigrants, MN leader Enrici said running was essentially pointless. He paid the MN’s \$20 registration fee but wrote it off as “good money after bad.”

13. “I don’t see how they can possibly call themselves the legitimate Talossan government,” warned Geoff Tomasüt, who first put Talossa on the internet and voted CLP in the last free election. He called on Enrici to use the MN’s Cosâ majority to simply form a government, oust Fritz, run Talossa, and hold a free election. But the MN would not move without the Cort, since precipitous partisanship had plunged Talossa into the crisis in the first place.

14. On 14 September, Lorentz rendered his own personal verdict. Despite his promise “to follow the laws of the Kingdom,” it was a rambling list of personal attacks made without citing a single law or precedent. It amounted to the idea that since some Talossan record-keeping had been “sloppy” in the past, book-thief Buchholtz ought to single-handedly rule Talossa. Or something like that. Suffice it to say, it was vintage Dan. Talossa was now, officially, under the rule of “sloppiness” rather than of law. Geoff Tomasüt – still a citizen – challenged the legality of Dan’s ruling, which was blatantly illegal under Article XVIII, Sec. 12 of the Organic Law. Lorentz slapped him down. “It seemed like Dan had some grudge [against other Talossans] that had been building for years,” Tomasüt later recounted.

15. But Lorentz was at least true to his own ancient convictions. In 1985, Lorentz had set out his agenda for Talossa: *“To make Talossa less and less important in the King’s life.”* Lorentz had worked for years – especially in the last year of Talossa’s constitutional existence – to disentangle his old friend Ben Madison from Talossa, and as long as there was hope that Talossa could survive as a democracy, Ben would always be a part of it. Dan’s verdict killed that last hope, giving Ben the personal breathing room he needed to pull away for a while and to get on with his life. To put the best spin on it, it was one of those “You’ll thank me for this someday” moments.

16. As more Talossans quit or went inactive, Buchholtz accused Ben of “forging” their letters of renunciation and insisted it was “illegal” (it wasn’t) for ex-Talossans to post on Wittenberg. He dishonestly backed out of a written agreement to buy the “Talossa” trademark, perhaps realizing that trademarks are useless against the prevailing ‘Napster’ culture of internet thievery. At the end of one lengthy tirade Fritz admitted: *“Maybe I ruined Talossa, Ben, but not on purpose.”*

17. Ben even offered to sell Fritz the National Archives for \$5,000 – roughly the amount of money Ben and his father had sunk into Talossa since 1979. Fritz agreed to buy, then suddenly threatened Ben with a lawsuit in US courts. Ben upped the ante, threatening to toss the Archives into the trash, just to see what Buchholtz, Lorentz, Yahn, and their legions of “new immigrants” would do; certainly the ninety-

plus “citizens” Fritz claimed to speak for could raise \$5,000. Instead, they had no interest in a bunch of papers that didn’t mention the CLP. Ben announced that he had thrown the Archives away, and shipped them to Canada for safe-keeping.

18. In the fall of 2005 Fritz and his friends “voted” to abolish the Opposition Leader and ‘officially’ made it legal to censor Wittenberg. Of more than 40 Talossans legally eligible to cast ballots, only *seven* bothered to do so. “It’s election fraud,” said Pete Hottetlet, alluding to George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*: “If you speak up, you become Snowball.” Woolley, leader of a Colorado-based group of CLP supporters, was declared “King of Talossa” after Lorentz illegally declared the Throne “vacant” and deposed the lawful King Louis I. Dozens of citizens were “purged” including Geoff Tomasüt, half a dozen other retired PMs and six-sevenths of the entire Senäts.

19. By 2007, the Talossan dream created in 1979 by Ben Madison had collapsed into three organized groups: a moribund, inactive “Gruberian Republic” on a web server owned by Martin-Pierre Frenette in Montréal, Canada; a weird Cornish-language based website; and what real Talossans called the “phony kingdom” of Fritzland, now based in Denver, Colorado, inhabited by “King Woolley” and his buddies. One dictatorship maintained control by packing the country full of fake voters in order to win every election; another dictatorship maintained control by deleting the accounts of members who voted for the ‘wrong’ parties. But the groups worked together, even going so far as to pretend to divvy up Talossa’s seven provinces between them.

20. Buchholtz himself quickly lost interest in the Talossa, and the friendships, he helped destroy. Gary Conâ would later write: *“Fritz has gone the route of ‘seagull management’, and is now flying away after flying in, crapping all over everything, and leaving the mess to be cleaned up by others.”* Fritz himself claimed that he was beaten at his own corrupt game of recruiting non-citizens to back his political agenda: *“John Woolley was elected the new King in much the same way I was Prime Minister, by bringing in a lot of new people from his part of the country who believed in him.”* After only a few months, Fritz got bored, dissolved the CLP, and lost his citizenship in the counterfeit country he had invented: *“I declined further office holding or even voting. In the near future, having missed three votes, I will no longer be a part of Talossa.”* ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Sixty-Three (2005-2007)
“Living in Diaspora: The Talossan Émigré Community”

“It would be a happier world if there were still a Talossa the way it used to be.”

1. Ben Madison, his family, many friends, and the large majority of real Talossans went into hiding. Young King Louis (picture) knew only that some mean people on the internet had stolen Talossa. The Talossan community stood aside from the internet craziness and savagery being propagated in their name, and spent two years renewing their friendships and learning to live in diaspora. The Kingdom’s official websites were taken down, the archives sent to Canada. In the place of the website at <http://my.execpc.com/~talossa> a sombre message was posted:

“The Kingdom of Talossa was a micronation founded in 1979, which, at its peak, had over 60 people involved in it. For 25 years we ran our own culture, civilization, language, political system, diplomacy, and discussion board. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. Talossa was supposed to be a way to have fun, but different people define ‘fun’ differently. And people whose idea of ‘fun’ included lying, cheating, stealing – all in order to ‘beat their enemies’ and ‘win the game’ eventually took over. For the rest of us, the real Talossans, the people who founded Talossa and sustained it for 25 years, that wasn’t fun. Many of us quit, others were driven out. Today there are at least three groups out there on the internet somewhere claiming to be ‘Talossa.’

“As for us, the original Talossans, we are part of the the Talossan Émigré Community, an informal group of people out here having fun, being friends, and keeping alive the great dream of having our own country!”

2. *Stotanneu*, the online chat board of the Émigré Community, was quickly hacked into by Fritz’s supporters and overloaded with hundreds of spurious posts full of random letters and gibberish. After security was improved, the board became a private place to reminisce and dream.

3. Most decent, normal people had no time for Talossa. When Frenette wrote, in the founding manifesto of Gruberia, “*What does your majority do for Talossa?*”, he was exactly right. What Talossa had become, a sick, self-obsessed, fanatical hate-cult, was indeed a completely alien thing to the majority of Talossans, who no longer found that kind of Talossa interesting or worth following. “I’m glad I got out of it when I did,” Tomás Gariçéir later reminisced.

4. Was it possible for something like Talossa to exist at all, without it becoming an oppressive Nazi environment of hate, paranoia, mistrust, violent threats, phony identities, political vendettas, email viruses, scofflaws, dirty tricks, trademark infringement, and the destruction of friendships?

5. Many came to the conclusion that in the age of the internet, the answer was “no.” The story of Talossa had become the Survival of the Looniest, yet one more internet chatroom dominated by bullies with no lives, jobs, or families. Real Talossans called them “Stinkards”; people for whom the fantasy game of Talossa became the end-all and be-all of their empty lives were lying, cheating, stealing and fighting their way to promote exclusive visions of what their Talossa “must” be. Kind reader, re-read the first two-thirds of this book, and you’ll understand the magnitude of the tragedy. You’ll see all the joy and creativity that was driven underground. Ben Madison later confessed:

“When I found myself drawing on the love and support of my wife to get me through tough times in Talossan politics, I

realized, 'My God, this thing has gone too far.' And it has. Talossa destroys friendships, it destroys relationships, it sucks away people's lives. It was unfair for me to ask friends to stay in Talossa when their participation subjected them to harassment, badgering, online ridicule, threats and public exposure, all in the name of Talossa."

6. The majority of Stinkards left Talossa in 2004 and joined Gruberia, but Ben's point was that such people were drawn to Talossa in the first place, were received enthusiastically into it, and became vital to its integrity and functioning. In 2005, there seemed to be no reason to believe that the supply of such people had dried up, and indeed, the Fritzes of the world reached out to Gruberia as kindred spectres. It seemed that unethical people were attracted to Talossa in disproportionate numbers. "Once I could finally admit to myself that I had created a monster, that my child was a thug, I realized that it was long since past time to go," Ben wrote.

7. Unencumbered by Talossa, in April of 2006 Ben attended his church's General Conference. He found himself back in a cocoon of love and peace, where his historical work is appreciated for its scholarship, not reviled as propaganda and lies. Ben is a published author, with a prize-winning M.A. thesis in history. The wargames he designs with Wes Enrici are published, and are highly praised and sought-after by hobbyists (their World War I game, *Death in the Trenches*, won the coveted Charles S. Roberts Award for 2005). What was it that made Talossa such a bad and unappreciative community? Why were the wicked and angry drawn to it? Is there something about micronations that attracts sickos? Or is it the internet, where as deposed Wittenberg moderator Pete Hottelet put it, "The most tenacious dickhead gets to set the rules"?

8. And yet... Talossa had also been a source of joy and pride for many people who stood above all that. Brook Pânetă, a citizen since 1985, later said that *"It would be a happier world if there were still a Talossa the way it used to be."* In that spirit, members of the Émigré Community took with them everything of historic significance to Talossa. King Louis was still a part of the community, and loyal Talossans still owned the country's 10,000 page national archives, the Speaker's Bell, all the issues of *Stotannen*, the country's incorporation in the State of Wisconsin, the country's original flag, its video history, its language database, the official stamp and seal, the trademark on the name "Talossa," the 1,600-year-old Byzantine coin, Talossa's medals and bumper stickers, and even the "Romanian Train Conductor's Hat" that King Robert (who turned 40 in 2005) first donned in 1979 at the age of 14. Talossans and their friends took great solace in knowing that if anyone really wanted to put Talossa back together, all the pieces were safe in storage, waiting for the dawn. A toast began to ring out over tables the world around: *"Next year in Abbavilla!"* ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Sixty-Four (July-August 2007)
“Next Year in Abbavilla”

*“We refuse to allow for a reality where the only versions of Talossa
are a tearaway republic or Dan’s latest version of the ‘peculiar way’.”*

1. In spite of it all, the Talossan community never died. Ben and his friends still lived and prospered in Milwaukee, while email and visits kept hope alive around the world. Some believed that if the nation was inactive, King Louis was still there, and Márcüs Cantaloûr was still a lawful PM (no legal election had ever replaced him). The Cosâ and provincial governments were never legally dissolved, while six of seven Senators had refused to follow the Stinkards in the days (as Talossans had come to say) “When Everything Collapsed.”

2. Even without a government or annual TalossaFest, Talossans’ sense of Talossanity remained. Talossa was a constant topic of conversation and a source of pride. Jean Williams, a citizen since 1985, kept asking: “*So, when do we take our country back?*” What galled so many of Talossan heritage was how their name had been stolen by two strange little groups: the Montréal-based “Republic” of Gruberia and the Denver-based “Kingdom” of Fritzland. A pivotal reflective moment came on 29 November 2006 when Dr Harry L. Madison, long the Kingdom’s Minister of Finance who helped keep Talossa funded over some twenty-five years, died at Vuode Palace at age 82. The quitters, who had spent years reviling and vilifying Harry as a “senile pocket vote,” now lionized his memory in a particularly maudlin display of political spew designed to make themselves look generous in a censored online forum where Harry’s own kids were prohibited from speaking.

3. In the spring of 2007, Talossans representing most of the country’s pre-collapse political parties began informally sounding each other out on rebuilding the nation. And on 25 July, the online discussion group *Stotanneu* was emptied out and reorganized as a secret, passworded board. In it, a core group of four patriots began to grope their way forward in the darkness.

4. Gary Conâ, the retired PM, had been in Ben’s living room on 26 December 1979 to witness the birth of the Kingdom itself. He brought a cautious, somewhat legalistic, and also somewhat pessimistic vision of the future. Márcüs Cantaloûr, the deposed (some said incumbent) PM, was the least radical of the bunch, suggesting that tougher immigration laws and an iron-clad citizenship loyalty oath would discourage troublemakers from joining up. He also insisted that if Talossans were to rally around anything, it should be their King – Louis I – and the royal family of the Madisons and Durnfords. Geoff Tomasût, the former PM who first put Talossa online in 1995, was the most “revolutionary,” insisting that Talossa had truly collapsed and could only be rebuilt in what he called a “return to first principles.” Geoff also taught the group that “the Jews lived in diaspora for nearly 2,000 years without a government,” and that rebuilding Talossa’s complex government with its voluminous laws and 20-page OrgLaw need not be the top priority. Finally, there was Ben Madison, the founder of pretty much everything that made Talossans Talossan. Hard-nosed and cynical, Madison felt that “the human element failed us” and that the key issue was one of “ownership.” This was not only about copyrights and trademarks, but about how some authority could step in when (for instance) the Uppermost Cort chose to break the law, as Dan Lorentz had fatally done in 2005. Madison unapologetically called for some sort of “authoritarian gimmick” that could kick out future troublemakers.

5. For two weeks, the four quietly debated and discussed. Talossans began to rally to their side, like Williams, Pete Hottelet, Francesco Felici, Brook Pànetà and Gary Swedenborg. At last the core group felt the time was right for a face-to-face conference. Saturday, 11 August, was a watershed day in the RT's 28-year history when these four elder statesmen met at Grecian Delight in Mussolini Province, in the room where so much was done on the Organic Law in 1996 and 1997. (Cantaloûr was there by cell phone.) It was the first "Talossan meeting" since the awful Nazi thugfest of 2005, and saw the unveiling of two brand-new green-and-red Talossan *bicoloreu* flags.

6. Geoff Tomasüt quickly took the chair. "*We refuse to allow for a reality where the only versions of Talossa are a tearaway republic or Dan's latest version of the 'peculiar way',*" he told the gathered patriots. "*It is 1979 again. We are starting from square one.*" In Geoff's view, the Organic Law and the Cantaloûr government it created were historical relics and no longer existed. Madison, backed by Cantaloûr, argued that there had to be some continuity between the old Talossa and the new; otherwise, why call the new one Talossa at all? Geoff insisted that many Talossans had in fact renounced their citizenship and that the Talossa they had known was dead. It was (in his opinion) legal sophistry to argue that they could constitutionally carry on as if nothing had happened in 2005. Ben personally disagreed on this point, but listened intently.

7. Geoff boldly suggested an unexpected new *Constituziun*, to consist of (1) a proclamation of national existence, and (2) a "Liberum Veto" to be held individually and unilaterally by each "Founder" of the revived state. Based on the famous law of mediæval Poland, any Founder could use the Veto to nullify all actions of state (except the *Constituziun* itself). No politicking, no majority votes – just an absolute "no" wielded by each conscience at the heart of the country. For instance, if a majority voted to abolish the monarchy, any Founder could veto the action. The group felt that use of this conservative power would be rare in the extreme (the mere threat would at least compel debate), but, comparing the Founders to the permanent members of the UN Security Council, Geoff insisted that their veto power would not be inappropriate in any way.

8. The idea was to take the existential responsibility for Talossa off of Ben's shoulders. Geoff pointed out how over the past 28 years, the juggernaut of the Big Ben Ego (and its supporters) had run over people who had no clue how to stand up for themselves positively without making angry nuisances of themselves. And if people like Lorentz were prepared to ignore the Organic Law, then nobody's rights were protected. Now any Founder could block any action (including Ben's) and force Talossa to reflect on how that action related to the fundamentals of national life. "This sets up a permanent firewall, a permanent restore point in the hard drive," Tomasüt said. In the past, people (for whatever reason and however honestly) claimed that "anything Ben wants automatically happens." Now any Founder could block anything Ben wanted.

9. "The proposal sounds radical and even bizarre," Ben wrote in *Stotanneu*, "but we hope that a good dialogue about it can be started. I personally am not 100% sold on the idea, but I am willing to consider it most strongly." It came as no surprise to anyone who knew Ben as a person, and not as a rhetorical cardboard villain, that he could support such a diminution of his own powers in exchange for a guarantee that he would always be a citizen of Talossa with a meaningful voice. This is something he had tried to do since he first proposed King Dobberpuhl in 1986.

10. Theoretically, both sides would be happy if they could agree to adopt a new founding document and then declare Talossa a continuation of the old Kingdom, even if its authority derived from this new

‘social contract.’ “Hopefully we can agree to disagree,” Ben wrote. “I disagreed with Geoff that there is no constitutional continuity between the old régime and the new one. However, I think it is largely a matter of semantics that we can disagree on and still agree on basic principles.” As to how the new *Liberum Veto Constituziun* related to a future restoration of the OrgLaw, Ben quoted Rabbi Hillel’s comment on the Golden Rule: “This is Torah! All else is commentary!” On that note, Tomasüt, Conâ, Madison and Cantaloûr endorsed a rough draft of the proposed *Constituziun*, with this straightforward preamble:

“We, the undersigned, having felt the absence of the Talossan state, and feeling this to be an unbearable situation, do hereby declare the re-establishment of the Talossan nation. We declare that said nation hereafter shall be referred to as the Kingdom of Talossa. In furtherance of this goal, we, the undersigned Talossan people, do hereby establish this Constituziun.”

11. As long as they all at least grudgingly consented to it, anything was now possible – including the restoration of the Organic Law and the continuity-cum-restoration of Cantaloûr’s government, a point on which the less radical faction all but insisted. Both sides felt that they had achieved what they wanted in principle, and agreed to discuss matters further in *Stotanneu*.

12. The spark that lit the Talossan Revolution was yet another joyous meeting of old friends on Talossan soil immortalized in a photograph. Long after dark, the three Talossan patriots met at Vuode Palace. In the very bedroom “inside the house” where in 1979 the Kingdom first began to breathe, they took the first official act in reconstituting Talossa and signed the “Vuode Palace Statement” of 11 August 2007, soon cosigned electronically by Cantaloûr:

“We recognize that due to the collapse of constitutional courts and of law enforcement methods in Talossa, the legal, constitutional order under the Organic Law of 1997 has broken down. As a result, we must return to first principles and hold that Talossa exists largely as it did at its founding in 1979, in a state of new beginnings. We ask the people of Talossa to be patient with us as we explore our identity and legal status, and we call upon all Talossans to join us in that quest.” ●●●

Ár Päts, Part Sixty-Five (August 2007-March 2008)
“La Rilampadâ”

“A kind of softened absolute monarchy is maybe the safest solution.”

1. When asked what to do about the “weird people on the internet” who had stolen Talossa and his own throne, young King Louis replied: “Hurt ’em. But how?” But the Revivalists working behind the scenes to restore Talossa’s community weren’t interested in hurting anybody. Instead, a very different ethos from the one that had destroyed Talossa in 2004-2005 was reemerging: the low-key, friendship-based community that had preceded Talossa’s explosion onto the Internet. Tomasüt was key to reviving Talossa’s earlier more pleasant spirit. He urged Talossans to “live like Jews” as a community without losing themselves in the smarmy business of government.

2. At the end of August, Ben and Amy took a two-week road trip, the intent of which was to help gather the fragments. They delivered a Talossan-language letter to Tomás Gariçéir in Connecticut, though he was still burned up over the vitriol of Talossan politics. On Wednesday, 29 August, the PM in exile, Márcüs Cantaloûr, hosted Ben, Amy, and former RCT Leader and Secretary of State Davïu Foctéir at an Indian restaurant in Ottawa, Canada. This three-hour reunion, full of laughter and pointed commentary, reminded them all of the joy of being Talossan. Foctéir’s comment that Chris Gruber (who once accused him of being “a spy for Ben”) was “a few countries short of an empire” left them in stitches. Foctéir signed on with the revolution: *“I’ll always be a Talossan.”*

5. Since Harry Madison’s death, Ben and his sister had tried to sell his house – Vuode Palace. The sale was signed on 31 August. For the first time in RT history, Vuode Palace was no longer owned by a Talossan. But the new owners were fascinated by the Talossan saga, and assured Ben that the home would be available to the historic Kingdom for state functions.

6. On 7 September, long-time citizen Brook Pânetâ joined up. Marc Moisan and Tomás Gariçéir were posting on Stötanneu. RCT founder Albrec’ht Lupulardít rejoined in October. By December, 13 classic Talossans, all with long experience, had agreed to share the title “Founder” with Ben Madison: Fréiric Corïu (1983, PM), Jennifer Madison (1984, OpLeader), Jean Williams (1985, OpLeader), Brook Pânetâ (1985, Senator), Gary Swedenborg (1993, PM), Geoff Tomasüt (1995, PM, Cort Justice), Márcüs Cantaloûr (1996, PM, Senator), Pete Hottelet (1997, Senator), Gary Conâ (1997, PM, Senator), Albrec’ht Lupulardít (1997, OpLeader), Francesco Felici (1997, Senator), Davïu Foctéir (1999, SoS), and Amy Durnford (2000, Senator, in picture with King Louis).

7. The revival soon took on a name: *La Rilampadâ*, Talossan for “turning the lights back on.” Ben penned a song by that name, sung to the Catalan anthem: *L’auscïrità calixbina, És la réivâ prescâ moar’.... Quând q’ár pâts fost tirë ereux, Cridarhás që noi txà cichent!* (“Darkness is closing in, and the dream is almost dead... When our country is in need of heroes, Shout out: We are on our way!”)

8. At a low-key meeting at Oakland Gyros on 21 December, Ben, Gary and Geoff discussed the draft *Constituziun* and the question of moving to form a government. They unanimously agreed to this course of action. To legalize the *Rilampadâ*, Vuode Premier Ben Madison – never lawfully deposed – assembled the States General of Vuode Province on Talossa’s 28th birthday, 26 December 2007, and together they ratified a declaration outlining the low-key revival. “Our nation and its people still exist,” Vuode

asserted, claiming its government survived since “the last lawful election (14 February 2005).” It declared its loyalty to the Founders and their new 2007 *Constituziun*, and recognized Márcüs Cantaloûr as PM and Ben Madison as Secretary of State, both “able and capable to fulfil their offices and responsibilities as our public servants.” It went on:

“Due to the collapse of constitutional courts and of law enforcement methods in Talossa, the legal, constitutional order under the Organic Law of 1997 has largely broken down. Therefore, we urge the government to adhere to the principles and text of the Organic Law as closely as may be possible given the present revolutionary situation.”

10. This declaration ambiguously gave Cantaloûr power to do anything he wanted. It was ratified two days later by Maricopa’s Premier Pete Hottelet and Cézembre’s elected leader, Francesco Felici. Sensing the revival’s spirit, Felici wrote: “Of course I say yes, and of course you can count on my support. I’m very happy to be still a Senator and I’ll do my best to support our beloved country. Let’s not let anyone in this time. Faithful subjects only. I would suggest that you keep most of the power in your hands. A kind of softened absolute monarchy is maybe the safest solution.”

11. Atatürk Premier Cantaloûr ratified the declaration on the 30th. On the first day of 2008, Gary Conâ brought Mussolini Province into the fold, followed the next day by Florencia Premier Brook Pànetâ. Only Maritiimi-Maxhestic, that nest of CLP traitors, was left out in the cold. With six of seven provinces voting ‘yes,’ six-sevenths of the Senäts announced their support, and the MN and ZPT parties in the Cosâ (which had held 140 seats between them, out of 200) did the same.

12. Finally, on 14 February 2008 the *Rilampadâ* was formally proclaimed a success. Cantaloûr gave his first official address since 2005, delayed by a job-related move across Canada: “I definitely want to get things rolling as well. I am still willing to serve as PM, at least during our transitional stage. I guess it is typically Talossan to disappear for a spell. Well, I am back and still firmly supportive of our endeavours. I am ready and able to resume the office of PM of the Kingdom, if that be the will of my fellow Founders. I enthusiastically endorse the choice of Amy [Durnford] as Regent.”

13. By electing a Regent (the one thing the PM can order on his own, under the Organic Law), the Kingdom could have a government, a recognizable chain of command, that could rule by PD without reviving the industry of partisan politics immediately. As King Louis’ grandmother, and as Ben Madison’s wife, Amy Durnford was the obvious choice. On 9 March 2008, PM Cantaloûr called the election: *“I encourage all Talossans, both old growers and cybercits, to embrace the challenges that we shall surely face as a Kingdom and as a community. Our task is a noble one. All of us may one day look back at this time with pride.”* On 15 March, balloting began. For the first time in two years, a free and democratic election was underway in the Kingdom of Talossa. ●●●